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UNDER THE LAUREL

By the Same Author

PICTORIS CARMINA

A PAINTER'S MOODS

TALES IN METRE

Under the Laurel

By

Frederic Crowninshield

New York
Dodd, Mead & Company
1907

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

"PLANT MORE LAURELS"

["Defense of Poesy"; Sir Philip Sidney.]

Let not their noxious breath,
Whose speech would compass Poesy's death,
Upon her crystal fountains blow;
Rather more laurels plant, he saith,
The knightliest of all our white-dawn singers,
The kingliest of all our springtide bringers
Of lyric garlands, which have burgeoned so,
That none more sumptuous in the world-wide meadows grow.
Oh, more, more laurels plant
Along the purfled vales the Muses haunt,
That bards may wear their precious leaves,
And share the crowns that Honor weaves
For glorious captains who in triumph shine
Upon grim legioned fields, or fields of keel-churned brine.
More laurels plant, oh, more!
That all the wingèd bards who soar
Above the highest human worth
May show their godlike birth
To all on earth;
Nor mid the uncrowned throng unhonored go.
Oh, plant more laurels! let them grow
Up to the very marge of sempiternal snow.

Aye, let them massy blow
In every sweet Tempéan glade,
Until they glisten in the sunlight's glow,
While from the gracious shade
Their glassing, satiate leaves will backward fling
The azurn tints of unincumbered skies,
And all the dales with heavenly tinctures ring!
Oh, plant more laurels that will never fade
Upon those brows the Gods immortalize!

CONCESSIONS

Success in the forums of Law—say, what doth it mean,
White Angel of Truth?
Adjustment of conscience to end, of the soul to the sheen
Of delectable gold!
Success in the chambers of State—say, what doth it cost,
O Angel? Forsooth
The paring of precious ideals, dear liberty lost,
Sweet purity sold!
Success in the popular pulpit—say, what is its price,
Grave Angel of Truth?
A pruning of primitive speech to a taste supernice,
To Fashion's decree!
Say, who is thy servant, O white One, that curbs not his tongue,
That in age as in youth
Stands loyal—say, is it not he who sings and has sung
All things as they be?

NOT TOO HIGH!

Fierce eagles gauge the limit of their flight
into the light;
Nor would they vainly wheel to top the sun:
Beneath the snow-capped peaks their race is run,
But yet they soar above all human sight.

Pale sands define the frontiers of the sea:
whether it be
The glassy duplicate of heaven's blue dome,
Or swarthy surge inwove with angry foam,
It floods and ebbs within its boundary.

The dark, perennial pine doth not aspire
into the higher
Spaces where gleams the white, continual snow:
And though it scoff at weakling growths below,
It doth not blight itself in vain desire.

There seems to be unto the human soul
no constant goal:
It looks into unfathomable skies —
The far-beyond where its ideal lies —
And hopes to win therein its aureole.

Alas! the golden crown may be so high,
that if man try
To reach and wear this pure celestial thing,
He needs must fall with displumed, broken wing,
And in a living tomb unguerdoned lie.

Is it not well in all our flights to know
that here below —
Whatever bliss may be in heavenly life —
The human crown is worth the human strife,
That 'yond the peaks 'twere barrenness to go?

God gave fair land, and beauteous sea and sky;
oh, therefore why
Should he who has ideals these gifts contemn —
These jewels in his earthly diadem,
If he but make his earthly standard high?

'Twere vain, I think, to raise ideals so,
that all we owe
To God seems but a praiseless, paltry thing;
Oh, let us soar on sagest, human wing,
Until angelic vans in Heaven we grow!

THE PEACE OF SPRING

Fair are the hills with buds that tint the ramage gray,
Gently the spring wears on, as winter wanes away.
O God, grant me thy Peace!

Flushed is the orchard's bloom upon the enamored sky,
Sweetest its fragrance sweet, before its blossoms die.
O God, grant me thy Peace!

Soft are the issuing leaves upon the flaring elms,
The lilac's perfume dense my spirit overwhelms.
O God, grant me thy Peace!

Hushed are the quartered winds; the silvery sunshine
sheens
Upon the spruces dark, upon their fresh-tipped greens.
O God, grant me thy Peace!

Pallid the young vines' leaf, faint-fringed with tender
pink,
All Nature is divine, my swooning senses sink.
O God, grant me thy Peace!

Mute is the balsamed air, save when some birdling
sings
Songs of the coming life, that quickening radiance
brings.
O God, grant me thy Peace!

"FIRST PAINTER TO THE KING"

[Nicolas Poussin]

Though Norman born his genius winged its youthful
flight to Rome,
And there it cast its roving plumes to make itself a
home
Amid the maze of mighty works beneath the mightier
dome.

It was a time when thither flocked the pundits of the
Earth
To gaze upon old upheaved things, to which the art
lent worth,
Or set in type pontifical to what their brains gave
birth.

And he a seeker too for truth, examined, probed, and drew
The relics of an antique world, which he deemed far more true
Than all the prized "*vaghezza*" sweets, or the "*fa presto*" crew.

He measured fair Antinous, and limned in full detail
Præneste's famed mosaic floor, and matched the fresco pale
Where Peleus takes his nereid bride, enveloped in her veil.

And what Vitruvius did write, Alberti did compile,
And great da Vinci's tract he read; while leisure to beguile
He mused upon the classic page to dignify his style.

Yet most of all, I deem, he loved to watch the tawny flow
Of Tiber coursing to blue seas beyond Saint Angelo —
The type of those Arcadian streams that in his pictures show —

Or wander o'er the arch-bespanned and melancholy waste
So dear to every pensive eye, or satisfy his taste
Amid the sombrous ilex groves, or 'neath the columns chaste

Of Sibyl's temple crowning vales through which the torrents foam,
O'erbrowed by immemorial cliffs (where poets built their home)
To form the gentle Anio that wests its way to Rome.

From out the ranks of humble folk, he chose himself
a wife,
And in his unpretentious house he led the tranquil life,
Dispensing with all servile aid to hold aloof all strife.

For fifteen years he never swerved from his laborious
aim,
Until his mastery conquered him a far transalpine
fame,
Till out his natal Northern land from royal lips there
came

The blandishments of gold and state, and every ease-
ful thing,
If he would leave his Roman life, and to gay Paris
bring
His chastened art, and title take " First Painter to the
King."

" A thousand crowns for traveling, a thousand crowns
a year,
If thou wilt pass from poor estate to wealth that waits
thee here,
And all the noble works to do, that to thy guild are
dear."

And unelated Poussin heard, and turned it in his mind :
" Why should I choose imagined joys for those I leave
behind,
Or strut a painter-prince abroad, when in my home
enshrined

Abides sweet Peace a certainty?" And so two years were spent
With this or that excuse until he could no more invent:
Then with reluctant journeying to Paris north he went.

There Richelieu embraced him, and Royalty did deign
To bid "Sieur" Poussin welcome at the lordly Saint Germain,
And in the presence of its Court his genius did maintain.

Returning to his sumptuous house, full well-equipped, behold!
A velvet purse distended with ten thousand crowns of gold:
Oh, what a garniture compared with austere ways of old!

"It is a little palace fair—for I must call it so—
With every need, and even wood (he wrote with pen aglow)
And wine expressed from luscious grapes two mellow years ago!"

The warrant signed by royal hand brave Poussin did create
"First Painter to his Majesty," with power to regulate
The embellishment by art and craft of all the King's estate.

And noble patrons decked his life with flowers, lest should irk
Their gilded importunities for famed "Sieur" Poussin's work,
Or all the mean annoyances that 'neath the laurel lurk.

A "Holy Supper" this one asked to decorate his shrine,
And Jesuits craved the "Miracle" of Xavier the divine,
While others begged for every sort of secular design,

Not heeding the full-weighted task to paint with his own hand
Some twoscore panels for the Louvre, with patent to command
The brush and brains of all the arts—a grieved, caballing band

Exasperate to see their work upvamped by one, forsooth,
Who had but scant diplomacy: for speech seems oft uncouth
Upon a tongue peremptory, that trumpets out the truth.

And all the while for wife and home, and Latin sun he sighs
(He fears the sullen influence of gray, transalpine skies),
His loved antique, sweet classic groves—and what "these Goths" despise.

To be avenged upon the rout who in his eyes blaspheme,

He paints an allegory clear of which the haughty theme
Is Hercules triumphant o'er the Vices he did deem

Were in his foes personified—crass Ignorance and Spite.
Alas, he never dreamed *his* sweets might prove as aconite
On other lips! that he himself was moulder of his plight!

Nay, e'en the Intendant of the King did scarcely dare to tell
The royal wish—but why describe the mood wherein he fell;
Is not a soul unparadised, forsooth in very hell?

And so he fashioned "pressing needs" (half true) for grace to leave
His "palace in the Tuileries"—nought but a short reprieve
From his accepted stewardship was all he asked. Conceive

A longing heart once more among the things it holds most dear,
An untormented, tranquil home, a heavenly atmosphere;
What think you? would it back to hell? I judge the answer clear.

Oh, what a joy it was again to see the poppy bloom
In scarlet livery against some gray, dismantled tomb,
Or hear the plash of argent jet beneath the cypress gloom!

Oh, what a joy it was to face transfigured toward the East,
And watch Gennaro's bluish peak as silver dawn increased,
Or note it pass to blushing rose as golden eve surceased!

What bliss to stand on Pincian hill and gaze into the West
Where distant pine-trees spread their copes above the purple crest,
And great Saint Peter props the sky in glory manifest!

Here Poussin lived yet twenty years without a sole regret
For that small palace 'yond the Alps, and all the splendid fret
That comes to him whose hungry heart on blazonry is set.

Nor cared he whit for large returns; in age he asked no more
For canvases than in his youth; "it was a man's devoir
To gauge emolument by pains"—for fame he did ignore.

His life, alike the art he lived, was governed by restraint—
An art both orderly and sweet, and free from every taint
Of those improvisations the Barocco men did paint.

And when at length the eye congealed betokened he
was dead,
Reft friends did weep, and at their task perfunctory
priests did shed
Hot, unaccustomed tears about this late-born Gre-
cian's bed.

O Reader, if incredulous, consult the dighted page
On which he brushed his classic poems—so musical
and sage —
That hold their own on walls elect from Louvre to
Hermitage.

A TOMB IN THE CERTOSA OF PAVIA

[Ludovico Sforza—il "Moro," 1451–1508, Beatrice d'Este, 1475–1497.]

What peaceful majesty, what sweet repose
Within thy predilect Carthusian shrine,
O Moro vanquished, vanquisher, is thine!
While by thy side lies Beatrice divine.
And though it be that no recorder knows
What earth assimilates thy scanty dust,
Whether some bleak transalpine tempest blows
About thy charnel-house, or, as we trust
Thou sleepest in the warmth of native air,
Thy spirit bides within this convent's pale —
This carven casket on a mighty scale,
This jewel-case of stone;
Nor yet alone,
Nor yet alone; but an immortal pair,
Proud Milan's sumptuous Lord, and Beatrice the fair!

Aye, "vanquished, vanquisher!" for thou dost reign
Through what Rapacity hath grudging spared;
And though but time-worn tithings we have shared
Of thine estate, yet have these shards declared
The truth of what would seem but boasting vain.
Yea, all thy works were incensed with the taste
That breathed itself abroad the Lombard plain,
So delicate, so fanciful and chaste!
Yea, all thy works were worthy of thy care —
Parchment or bronze or stone—all, all impart
Thine ardent, universal love of Art,
Which for thy faults atone.
Not thee alone,
Alone we praise; but a transcendent pair,
Gay Milan's Lord of feste, and Beatrice the fair!

The gracious Muses at thy bidding came,
And garlanded thy days with rarest flowers
Unfolding 'neath the warm Parnassian showers —
Choice minstrelsy and lore and all that dowers
The life complete. Yet if the lesser name
Of thy deft celebrants be somewhat dim,
Time amplifies the rightful, brilliant fame
Of two who glitter as the cherubim —
The architect who set in sapphire air
Blest Mary's dome, and he who limned below
On fading wall the great "Cenacolo,"
To every Christian known.
To thee alone
Not all the praise; but to the radiant pair,
Moro the gallant Lord, and Beatrice the fair!

Dear Beatrice, so childlike, yet so old
When thou wert called upon to helm the state!

Nay, not a jot of all the joys that wait
On youth's caprice wouldst thou forsooth abate —
Ribbons of irised hues, brocades of gold,
The flush of venery, the zest of dance
And joust and song, and pleasures manifold !
But yet with highest thoughts didst thou enhance
Thy girlish life, since thou wouldst freely share
Thine hours with artist, humanist, and bard,
Who gave thee of their best—a laureled guard
Encircling thy sure throne.
Not thee alone,
Alone we hymn ; but a resplendent pair,
Moro the gala Lord, and Beatrice the fair !

Blithe, lovely bride, thank God thou didst not hear,
Stark in thy tomb, the northern vulture scream
From off the Alps, nor see the ribald stream
Of foreigners defile thy cult supreme !
Thank God thou couldst not shed a piteous tear
When the foul herd thy lord did alienate
To gnaw his heart out in a dungeon drear !
And though he held the honor of the state
Mere servile mesh a foeman to ensnare,
Still do we weep (albeit we curse a crime
That surely draws the wreak of vengeful time),
And his great sin condone.
Not him alone,
Alone we weep ; but a pathetic pair,
Moro the exiled Lord, and Beatrice the fair !

RENASCENCE

Sweet is the mountain-ash
  When May-month airs are blowing;
With dew the furrows flash
  When early swains are sowing.

Fragrant my new-born dreams
  When crabbed gales are leaving;
With pearls my fancy gleams
  When spring her mesh is weaving.

TO FILIPPO LIPPI

How you hearten, Fra Filippo, all your brothers of the brush!
Bless your red blood's gaillard globules, that improvidently rush
Through your veins of fifty summers, seething through the checks of age!
You (so adipose and ugly, old enough to be more sage),
Win a girl just past her twenties, amply fair, forsooth, to pose
For the blessed Queen of Heaven, fragrant as an earthly rose,

That gives courage to us painters! Is the brush for
aye to be
Of a flowering girlhood's fancy through our years the
guarantee?
Was it eloquence that did it? or the halo of the trade?
Yes, methinks it was the poetry out of which we all
are made.
Carping dry-as-dusts do tell us that Lucrezia left her
cell
Since it irked her—no, she left it, all because she
loved you well.
Loved you as the women ever love the artist young or
old,
Love the poets, love the workers who transmute crass
clods to gold.
Fifty summers? Why, Vasari tells us when at sixty-
three
(I for one believe dear Giorgio—he is true enough
for me)
You laid down the brush forever, 'twas the kinsman
of some love
Helped you with a pinch of powder to a cooler home
above.
More the pity, jocund Frate! had you touched your
hundredth year,
Still you would have meshed the maidens, still have
rallied all us here,
Who perchance have passed our threescore—but why
draw a noxious line?
Lines were naught to you my Frate—may our loves
endure as thine!

A JULY DAWN

I rose at earliest dawn
And saw the hueless light,
Born of Cimmerian night,
Engendering the virid lawn,
The vale, the verdured hill.
All, all as pallid, rigid Death was still.

Then suddenly I heard
Upon the air serene,
From out the covert green,
The tuneless cherup of a bird —
First herald of the day —
Prime pursuivant of filmy morning gray.

Anon a burst of song,
An inharmonious quire,
From feathered throats that tire
Of shortest nights—and yet so long!
While tardier chanticleer
Augments the strain with his shrill, lusty cheer.

It seemed as though the air
Were vocalized with joy —
Gladness without alloy —
As though it must for aye be fair!
And as the day increased
How glad I was my travailed night had ceased!

I sat and gazed awhile,
Scenting the fresh-mown hay,
The breath of breaking day,
And sweets that morning doth compile.
Until at last the sun
Gave pledge his daily coursing had begun.

Whereat there was surcease
Of quiring matin bird —
Not e'en a trill was heard —
As golden glowed the clouds of fleece.
And as I pondered deep,
I fell into the sweetest second sleep.

A PAINTER'S PRAYER

Give me thy Strength, O Sun—thy glorious Strength,
That my dim work may shine,
And gleam divine,
As all thy lumined things throughout the length
And breadth of this fair span of Earth!
Give me thy Gold, O Sun—thy burnished Gold,
That all the marveling peoples may behold
Upon the painted page my visions aureoled!
Then would there be no dearth
Of puissant means wherewith to light
The bosky hills, the streams, the meadows dight,
Nor lack of austere shade
To drape in swarthy folds the gloomiest glade.

SONG—WITH MY LADY

'Neath the solemn willows shady,
Cooled by gracious breezes blowing,
On an olive stream soft flowing,
I am sailing with my Lady —

Lady of the sun-born tresses,
Lady with the eyes of heaven,
Fairer than the wonders seven,
Who doth madden whom she blesses.

O my heart be as the willows
Proof to sunlight's piercing glances!
O my head be as the billows

Cool and quiet! unavailing
Be the lures that Love enhances,
While I'm with my Lady sailing.

SONG—IN WHITE

The moon in a mist shines over the tree —
Faint white mist,
Great white moon —
I wait by the tryst till she cometh to me
Out of the mist—oh, when will it be?

Through the low light a pale form I see —
Low white light,
Sweet white form —
Slowly it moves o'er the glimmering lea
In all its wan beauty—oh, can it be she?

Arms that are white as the froth of the sea —
Soft white froth,
Firm white arms —
Encircle my heart; and mine girdle thee,
O Love of the Mist! Yes, yes it is she!

ARIA

The autumn sun had risen
From his chill, nocturnal prison,
And his rays were streaming, streaming
O'er meadows streaked with white;
While my soul was dreaming, dreaming
Supernal day-dreams bright.

The sky was clear and pearly
In the crisping hours early,
And the trees were flaunting, flaunting
Their opulence of hue;
While my heart was vaunting, vaunting
Its wealth of color, too.

And though the land was mellow
With vibrant reds and yellow,
And the welkin beaming, beaming,
Yet I thought of far-off night;
For I knew the gleaming, gleaming
Must end in hueless blight.

BICYCLING

The Moon flies over roof-ridge and tree,
As I roll along on my wheel;
And she alone keepeth pace with me,
As down the white road I steal.

IN TORRID DAYS

Come thou, East Wind!
From over the fluent, ungrassed sea,
From over the plains unburnt, unbrowned,
From out of the barrens where fogs abound,
With rush of thy pinions gray and free,
Oh, come, dear wind!

Pity a city's pain,
Pity the hands like fire,
Sate the palate's desire,
Bring with thee mists that taste of the brine,
Bring with thee chilling vapors benign,
Oh, bring sweet rain,
Giving the tossing ones yearned-for sleep;
Oh, come, cool Wind, from the sunless deep!

COMMENSURATE

Large life—large lines—a landscape broad and drear,
Wide, barren coasts, rough dunes heaped by the surge,
And swart sea-waves that with swart heavens merge.

Large grief—large wastes—a great terrestrial mere,
A growth of stones, gray tombs in lieu of trees —
A Nation's dregs—the red blood's ashen lees.

Small life—small scope. At times I cry in pain,
"O lovely hills, O daisy-dowered plain."

ORISON

So tender is my heart this morn,
O Lord of shine and rain,
I would not for the Inds take up
The intertangled skein
Of tedious toils and goodly works,
Until I here again
Outpour from its translucent depths
A pure, mellifluent strain.

SONG—WHAT WILT THOU BRING?

What wilt thou bring me, O Day?
Wilt thou not say?
Oh, bring me my love so sweet, so sweet,
With limbs like the willow, with gold-sandaled feet,
Bring her, dear Day!

What wilt thou bring me, O Morn?
Wilt thou adorn
My love with thine opals that gleam, that gleam,
And bring her enwreathed in her smile supreme,
Wilt thou, O Morn?

What wilt thou bring me, O Noon?
Grant me this boon —
Oh, bring me my love so white, so white,
With hair like the sun at the blue zenith's height,
Grant me this boon!

What wilt thou bring me, kind Eve?
Wilt thou not weave
A crown for my love so gay, so gay
As the bright saffron clouds that dapple the gray,
Wilt thou not, Eve?

What wilt thou grant me, O Night?
Grant me the light
From all thy clear lustres in all thy dim sphere,
That I may behold her so dear, so dear,
In thy shadows, O Night!

THE NYMPH AND THE SWAIN

She knew she loved him not
For her heart was far away
In a cool sequestered grot,
Where a lustrous triton lay.
Yet a love-fledged shaft she shot:
And the arrow smote a swain
A-piping midst the grain.
She gave her grace full sway
In this fascinating play,
The privilege of every sweet nymph's lot.
The skies were coaxing, too,
And the land of garden-hue,
While the madrigal he blew
As zenith-sun was hot.
Yet to his roundelay
She durst not carol "yea,"
And would not murmur "nay,"
Because, forsooth, she knew
Her nymphish heart was true —
But, oh, she loved this fascinating play!

Consenting lips, conniving eyes,
If I should steal a kiss,
Ye would not overmoralize,
Ye would not weep, I wis.

THE SKIPPER'S SONG

Bend sail, bend sail, my lads, bend all your sail!
What if the scouring rack portend the gale,
Would ye for that, my lads, your canvas brail?

Close haul, close haul, my lads, and pound the sea!
Down, down the rail a-smoking through the lea,
No running soft on even keel for me!

Send up topgallant yards afore and aft!
Press, press more sail upon our eager craft!
Have we not sea-foam to our heart's-ease quaffed?

Set, set the gaff my lads and royal sail,
Then let the sullen tempest snarl and wail!
What lurid wave-caps ever turned ye pale?

House not a mast, my lads, house not a mast!
Heave on, my lads, heave on against the blast!
Who minds the storm-curse though it be his last?

Would ye wear ship, my lads, for very fear?
Would ye beneath bare poles to safety steer,
Because your craven lives to ye are dear?

Bend all your sail, my lads, bend all your sail!
What if the shivering keel proclaims the gale,
Would ye for that, my lads, your canvas brail?

THE RINGED MOON

A great white circle surrounds the moon;
What does it mean
This girdling sheen?
Does it mean a calm, or some huge typhoon,
The peace of the world, and a lasting boon,
Or a war of the nations bursting soon
Out of a sky serene?

Can so mighty a light a portent be
To beings so small,
Vile worms that crawl?
Can it be an omen to atoms like me—
A billionth drop in the welkin's sea?
Would a thing of so high a majesty
Mere midges deign to appal?

Or might it be a heavenly sign
Beyond our ken,
And not for men,
A Seraph signaling orders divine
To hosts of angels in infinite line—
Orders too awful for hands like mine
To write with a conscious pen?

Whate'er it may mean in Paradise,
'Tis a marvelous sight
This glorious night

To wondering, rapturing, mortal eyes,
This great bright circle that rings the skies,
While at its centre the cold moon lies
Emitting its glacial light!

DISTINCTION

How glorious was the morning sun-sprent sheen
O'er the wide sweep of green!
The dazzling clouds unfashioned to shed rain,
Existing but to paint the hills deep blue,
And all the vales with gold to intervein —
The gold that lifts the blue to higher hue
And is itself upraised to livelier strain.
Yet when I saw this later view,
These tender birch-leaves of so quiet tone
Swaying upon a sky of pearly gray —
Nimbus above; but where it softly lay
Upon faint hills, a filmy argent zone —
I raptured at these tranquil tints alone!
No urgent dark or light,
The highest quiet white
Being the pallid ramage of the girl-like tree,
That might a hamadryad be
Chitoned in sombre green—her white arms free.
Yea, when I saw this uninsistent scene,
So lovely in its low tonality,
The morning fulgent gold and blue and green
Seemed clamorous vulgarity.

THE ARMISTICE

[An incident related by Gen'l John B. Gordon, C. S. A.]

Soft twilight dusked the waning April day,
The cleaving river lapsed its seaward way,
Now many unembattled years ago:
The Southern hills were dappled with the gray,
The Northern heights were variegate with blue.
And there was Peace, although
Grim bayonets glistened with the sanguine hue
Dyeing the clouds—the Sun-lord's retinue.

From off the slopes, by foot and hoof tramped bare,
Rolls the reverbing anthem of the North
With all the ravishment of trumpet blare;
While from a hundred thousand throats pour forth
A simultaneous "hurrah"!
Anon upon the facing austral crests
The Southern song its love of land protests
With fiery blast and hot, voluminous throat,
Ringing its music-challenge—note on note—
With chivalric "huzza"!
Then silence for a moment holds its sway,
And armèd hosts are mute as darkling day.
When lo! upon the acquiescing gloam,
From every unit in that rangèd throng,
From every trump, from every rapturous mouth,
From myriad soldiery both North and South
Rise the sweet strains of undeliberate song

Up to the pale gold stars aloft the dome —
The touching, tear-mist bars of "Home, Sweet Home."
And alien hearts all quire as one —
Hearts that will fiercely strive ere the next day be run.

NO MORE!

I can no more!
The fretted skies their choicest tinctures bring,
The gladsome birds their noontide descant sing,
All sing—all bring,
And urge as oft before:
But oh, sweet Heart, thy soul hath taken wing!
I can no more!

It may not be!
White breezes of the dawn through hemlocks flute,
The vermeiled airs of eve through aspens lute,
They lute—they flute
Their melodies to me:
But thy inspiring voice, alas, is mute!
It may not be!

I'll sing no more!
Though 'neath soft winds proud purple lilies sway,
Though o'er the starry meads fair maidens stray,
All stray—all sway,
As oft they did of yore:
Since thou, dear Heart, canst never hear my lay,
I'll sing no more!

A COMPARISON

As thou passest dainty maid,
With thy calling, calling eyes,
With an arch demeanor staid
That thy purpose all belies,
In thy raiment tender-gay
Like the garniture of May;
As thou passest pretty girl,
Yes, I note the graceful swirl
Of thy golden, golden hair
Above an ear divine.
And I would that mobile pair
Of dimples, ah! were mine.
But yet thou art less fair
Than that drab across the street,
Than that frowzy wench a-bearing
Her faggots on her head,
That queen-like wench a-wearing
The ripped corsage in red,
Nor in her squalor caring
For whomever she may meet —
The splendid creature faring
On bruised, unshodden feet!

THE METROPOLIS

Mean braggart man, and naught but man
With all his murky gear
Do I see here.
Oh, would mine eyes might freely scan
Wide *manless* sweeps on Nature's plan
'Neath heavens clear.

AFTER SUNDOWN

I saw the white moon through a deep-red tree
That gloomed from a crest o'erhanging a lea
As calm as a soul's serenity;
While feathery rack swirled far on high
Over a tea-rose western sky.

LET THE PAST GO!

Swift as the northwest gales dear memories wing,
That through the wan green, spiring larches sing
The songs of lovelier lands beyond the hills,
Breathing of fonder lawns and groves and rills,
And alien raptures bring,
And foreign fragrance blow:
But oh,
Let the Past go!

Thick as the daisies in an unscythed field —
Gold-hearted daisies that complacent yield
To clover-perfumed Zephyrs' urgent play —
White, far-off thoughts throughout the summer day
Lie everywhere revealed,
And all the landscape strow:
But oh,
Let the Past go!

I cannot raise my color-loving eye
Upon the ever-changing, marvelous sky,
But that there breaks upon my wondering view
A fairer gold, or rose, or pearl, or blue
Which serve to glorify
The homelier show:
But oh,
Let the Past go!

The sullen crests that thresh the shelving shore,
And from antarctic floes their message roar,
Bring to my ear the azurn, low-voiced wave
Of softer seas that olive margins lave,
And whispered words of yore
That dearer, clearer, grow:
But oh,
Let the Past go!

Nay, in the city's crowded, cañoned street
If I behold the tenting clouds that fleet
From airy cornice-line to cornice-line,
My heart harks back to some old belfried shrine,
Lancing the heavens sweet
I used so well to know:
But oh,
Let the Past go!

DEAD!

Ah, who in the joy of his being,
In the flood of his life, in the tide
Of his hearing, and feeling, and seeing,
With a flower of spring at his side,
Hath unexpectedly heard
That terrible, terrible word —
That irreclaimable "dead"?
And lo! the flower hath shed
Its white and its gold and its red.

Aye, "dead"—beauty no more—
And all the infinite graces
Gone! and leaving no traces
Save those the time-surf effaces
On the sands of Memory's shore.

All gone! nothing left but regrets
That we might have grappled with Death,
That we might have safeguarded the breath
Of fair life, and remorse that besets,
And self-accusations. Perhaps,
Even now the heart's blood might lapse
Through the gold the red and the white
Had we used our resources aright.

Hateful, the haunting song
That wails its iterate "wrong"!
And cursed the reproaches insisting
In ears unwillingly listing,
That every move which we made,
And every plan that we laid
Was error piled upon error,
Till grief is no grief—but a terror!

Ransack the house high and low!
Scrutinize every nook,
Each casket and folio and book,
For whatever image may show
The mien of our fair-petaled flower—
For every tinct that doth glow
As the red the white and the gold—
For every trait that did dower
The lost with lurings untold,
With fascinations tenfold

The irised flakes of the shower,
Or the bloom of a paradised bower!

Range them on table and wall,
O'er all available space,
That turn as we list we may face
The radiant features revealing
A past we fain would recall,
Till over our heart-hurt comes stealing
A respite from suffering's thrall.

No, no!—take them away;
They only serve to sustain
The shrieking pitch of the pain
That grows with the growth of the day.
For this was begotten in laughter,
And that in the mind which comes after
The gentle rebuff of a breeze
Floating over the bee-pollened leas,
Just enough to sober a flower
Sweet fruit of sunshine and shower—
Oh, take them, take them away!

But would it be loyal to think
Of ought else? to cease to create
The image that scathes? to drink
Some nepenthe? or in anguish abate
A tithe of self-torture by bending
To inexpugnable Fate
Or to Solace her blessings protending?

O Death, "why not I, why not I,"
In an outpour of passion we cry,
"With the life so cruelly fled"?

Would we not in an ecstasy lie
In the same terrestrial bed,
While our souls would reëcho the laughter
And the sweetly grave mind that comes after,
In heaven beyond the deep sky?

* * * * *

Peace, peace—no longer war:
And the white kirtled hours pour
From their fair-chiseled vases the balm
That o'er our heart's turmoil dispreading—
Its opal with murkiness wedding—
Brings billowless sadness and calm.
No need to hang or to hide
The traits of our spring-tide flower,
That neither gladden nor lower:
For they ever and ever abide,
In vision close by our side
In conference boon as of yore,
Evincing now as before
The red the gold and the white,
The weaving of shadow and light,
The purling of soft-flowing laughter
And gravity sweet that comes after—
The mood of the sky before night.

REST IN PEACE!

Now thou art free,
Poor girl! I never knew thee well,
Yet those who love me used to tell
Of thy brave life; nor can I quell
The tears that rise for thee.

Hard was the strife
To win thy daily bread in pain,
And bear the sceptic's cold disdain —
As though it were a joy to feign
The tragedy of life!

Yet such thy doom:
For thy dark days were but a shade
That swept along a gilded glade;
Or like some sunless flowers that fade
Even before they bloom.

This song I lay
Upon thy bier. It cannot heal
Thy cruel past: yet what I feel
I must to gentle hearts reveal
Before I close my day.

THE LAST GLEAM

The years creep on
Like violet shadows from a westering light
Up, up the hill
With failing force until
They touch the orient sky yet bright,
Albeit the work-day sun be almost gone.
Blest radiance of the things well done
Before we faint into a dreamless night!

WINTER IN THE STREETS

Stinging gales of winter —
Romping forth
Out the glinting north —
Sweep the frozen river,
Till the ice-floes shiver,
Till the thin air quiver!
Then they fleet —
Swift as mountain runnels —
Through the stone-girt tunnels
Of the street;
Dust-clouds charioteering,
Monster-like careering,
Their huge crests uprearing,

While they trail
A lingering tail
On the snowless earth;
Quickly disappearing
To give birth
To another, steering
Through the streets;
Whom it meets
Flouting, jostling, jeering.
Such are blasts of winter
In the streets.

DECEMBER SABBATH

[In town.]

Dull the morn and scant the light
From the murky clouds o'erhanging,
Absent is the week-day clanging —
'Tis as cheerless as the night,
Gloomy night.

Muffled people breathing smoke
Churchward o'er chill streets are wending,
Mayhap to their souls attending,
Mayhap felonies to cloak,
Deep to cloak.

Patient nurses slowly roll
Babies furred to ruddy faces
Up and down with sullen paces,
Sullen as the belfry's toll,
Dismal toll.

Here and there along the street
  Shrilling boys are coasting, sliding,
  Sabbath sanctity deriding —
What to them is quiet sweet,
                Sunday sweet?

Rebel boyhood, were I young,
  We would play and shout together,
  Mock at glowering Sunday weather,
Leave no song of mirth unsung,
                Of joy unsung.

But in sportless age I pray;
  "Come, oh, come, gay Monday morrow,
  Go, oh, go, sad seventh-day sorrow,
Sunday gloom-clouds, fleet away,
                Far away!"

SWEET APRIL DAYS

Sweet blissful April days,
  So kindly soft, so still.
  Listen! a glad bird's trill
Doth welcome ye: but yet I praise
  Your mild quiescent ways

With no bold burst of song.
  Nay, in a gentle mood
  Informed with gratitude
That wintry blasts and cold nights long
  Have left my soul yet strong.

I reverently pray
In rhythm soft and low
As these sweet days, and so
Inaudible that only they
May hear who love my lay.

CORYDON SINGS

O great white cloud, prithee say, prithee say,
What news, oh, what news dost thou glisten to-day?
Doth my free-cinctured love roam o'er the soft hills
Where the bluish-green boscage shadows cool rills?
Doth she wish it were I when she tangles the breeze
In her wildering hair? Or down on the leas
Doth she halt thee, white cloud, on thy lazuli sky
To waft thee her secret? Is it I—is it I?

SPRING MADRIGAL

Ye deep blue shades that course the barren hills
Bring me my love! Ye tender leafing trees,
That flash all gold and green upon the leas,
Bring me my love! The young year's radiance fills
My bourgeoning heart with longing uncontrolled.
O Love, let me enfold
Thy spring-tide life ere falling blossoms swirl
Like snow-drifts drown soft lanes. Sweet girl
Oh, come! Behold
The broidered meads! See how fair clouds are rolled
Athwart kind skies, and how the vales are flecked
With hues divine—how all the world is decked
With grace untold!

PARLEY WITH THE WINDS

Whence comest thou Wind of the South
  That makest soft willows to sigh,
  That filmest the pitiless sky —
The pitiless blue of the drouth?

I come, I come from the sea,
  Loaden with mists like the pearl,
  With moans from cool breakers that curl
On a barren, white-margined lee.

And I sob, and I sob all the day
  Amid the sad larches and pine,
  While I veil the clear ridges that line
The welkin with meshes of gray.

Then I weep on the fiery earth,
  On the things that imploringly swoon,
  And I come as a heavenly boon
To the life awaiting its birth.

And I bring to the brain thoughtless rest,
  To the nerves overwrought by the heat
  Relaxation ineffably sweet,
With the balm of the slumbering blest.

Whence comest thou, Wind of the North
  That lyrest through oak-leaf and elm,
  That dost the dark storm-rack o'erwhelm,
From what kingdom wingest thou forth?

I come from the kingdom of Gleam,
From the uttermost ice of the pole,
From snowdrifts white as the soul
A Vestal might languishing dream.

And I drive o'er the blue-spanning space
Great clouds that as opals do glow,
And swift as fell shafts from the bow
Of Artemis, Queen of the chase.

And I toss the far shades on the hills
All purple and azure and green,
And I gild with intolerant sheen
Pale reaches the husbandman tills.

But I bring no anodyne rest;
For I string to its verge every nerve,
And all the resources that serve
To lift from lowland to crest.

WHITE NOON

How beautiful the noonday's radiance white,
Unmasking every precious local hue,
Painting the far-off ridges heavenly blue,
Glinting all nature with its diamond-light!

The rich suffusion of the nascent sky,
The greater glory of the couching hours,
The florid opulence of rainbowed showers,
Seem fashioned for the less instinctive eye.

E'en as I sing the dark gray-purple crest
Is stained with flashes of autumnal sheen —
Gold lights that twixt deep shadows intervene —
While over all the vibrant heavens rest.

At morn my spirits rise with rising day,
At eve they fall with falling of the light,
At noon they touch the acme of their flight;
Can this be why I love the zenith's ray?

If all be true of what is psalmed above,
If angels shine in robes of spotless tone,
If dazzling, whitest light floods from the throne,
Oh, then I know why gleaming noon I love!

THE THIRST OF AGE

As the year grows old
All Nature sways to gold.
Lift up thy lids and see
On yonder frondent tree
Yet young, yet green and stanch,
An aureate branch,
The nuncio of its gorgeous destiny —
All gold, all gold!

Thus men do turn
As they collect the years; when naught is left
Of youth; when their love-lute is cleft;
When joyances they spurn.

At first a mild desire,
The harbinger of age —
A flash upon the green—and then a raging fire —
A fearful thirst for gold that nothing can assuage,
Except the dark-plumed one, who slakes the funeral pyre.

THE MOTHER

Often was she sadly seen,
Gentle mother, softly gliding
Through Death's tillage, there abiding
By a hummock ever green.

'Neath the sod her life-love lay —
Not the lover's love enthralling,
Coy, capricious, surging, falling,
But the love that blights decay :

Love of mother for the son ;
Stronger when his ways are weaker,
Warmer when his skies are bleaker,
Freshest when his days are run.

Steadfast mother ! on his grave
Did she plant a rose-bush, tending
It with holiest care transcending
What her virgins Vesta gave.

Till at length she felt the breath,
Icy-cold and blood-congealing,
Pain-obscuring, light-revealing,
Of her kindly healer—Death.

Then she summoned kith and kin,
Whom with solemn words adjuring,
Bade them make an oath assuring —
When her heart should die within,

And her anguish find repose —
That, her mortal body burning,
And her gathered ash unurning,
They would spread it round the rose.

Oh, what fragrance must there be
From such flowers! and how tender
All the visions they engender
'Mid our harsh mortality!

MORITURUS

Blow swift ye blasts of mountain!
Blow swift ye gales of shore!
What matters it? I course not
O'er crag or sea-plain more.

Bend down ye lashing tree-tops!
Shrill loud the storm's refrain!
What boots it? I shall never
Behold your throes again.

Crouch low ye lithesome grasses
Beneath the winds that rave!
I care not, so ye gather quick
Upon my fresh-made grave.

BY AN OBSCURE GRAVE

O transcendental Pride!
That couldst not in God's consecrated earth
Give room to one thou deemedst of lower birth!
But thou her unescutcheoned corpse did hide
Within an inconspicuous, dingy nook.
Thou couldst not brook
That her dull slab should gloom beside
Thy bright, complacent stones. And yet, O Pride,
Not on thy gleaming monuments I look,
But on her rankly-hidden, sombre grave,
O'er which the darkling, pitying branches wave!

NEW-YEAR IN THE STUDIO

Oh, all but me!
Blithe Nature chimes the new year in;
From South to North rolls up the din
Of natal rites and jubilee.

All souls are glad;
And galliards shout "a happy year"
O'er wassail-cup and ample cheer,
While I alone—aloof—am sad.

Dawn breaks to day
Fair-garbed in blue-celeste and white,
Sun-haloed—oh, what splendent sight!
But she to me seems cinder gray,

And passionless,
Awhile my sullen, halting tongue,
Alike a riven lyre unstrung,
Can scarcely mask its tunelessness.

For while the world
Moves on its swift, titanic way,
And men are marching stanch and gay,
With all their bannerets unfurled;

Alas! 'tis mine
To brood amid a displumed past
Of hopes, of griefs, the toil amassed
Of year on year—old things that twine

Around the brain,
The heart, the sinews, aye, the life,
That are the parent, offspring, wife—
Things born in joy, yet born in vain.

What joy divine,
If eager hands would only take
Our rose-fresh produce—all we make
In verse or marble, hue or line,

Before they sear!
Before they lose their morning light,
Before they fade to murky night,
Before illusions disappear!

Oh, why this Art?
Oh, why the eye to penetrate,
Or why the god-gift to create
If we to no one can impart

Our life-blood's work?
If chance vouchsafeth not to share
Our ecstasies? Ah, how they stare
These unwed ghosts! Ah, how they irk

These incubi —
These joyous births accumulate,
Mere mummies now degenerate —
A smile degraded to a sigh!

All dead, all dead —
Ambitions, loves, the hot heart's bliss,
The half-attained, the shafts that miss
Their zenith-aim, and in their stead

Mere things—brute things,
Unwooed, unloved—rank rubbish-waste —
Old broken shards—crass dregs unchaste,
Though born to rise on whitest wings!

Ah, not for me
This gladsome greeting of the year,
The wassail-cup with ample cheer,
Nor natal rites, nor jubilee!

Yet while I brood
Within a grave-yard so forlorn,
Where lie ideals sweetly born,
It may be that another mood

Will come to me;
Another impulse seize my soul,
Another force my hand control
To trace the marvels I shall see.

TO A YEAR'S MATE

Dear friend, there is a time 'tween Eve and Night,
The hour crepuscular, when neither light
From out a sky that hesitates before
It suffereth stars, nor from the lamps that pour
Adown the streets their doubtful radiance white —
When neither beam from heaven or earth more bright
The other lesser one doth dominate.
And so unabsolute appears the state
Which still illumined by the paling flame
Of vigorous youth, doth now begin to shine
With wisdom clear and virtues that acclaim
The star-sown dusk of age. Oh, such is mine
Good friend of equal years, and such is thine!

SONNETS

SONNETS

"DIO MELA DIEDE, GUAI A CHI LA TOCCA"

"God gave it me, hands off"! God gave thee what?
The right to ply laborious hand and head,
The right to win unsleuthed my daily bread,
The right to shape my undetermined lot.
God gave it me, hands off! Then should I not
Give wing to every gift inherited,
Or won by rigid toil, unbalked, unled
By domineering gold, or brawling sot?
God gave it me, hands off! Yea, I would range
As free as Auster o'er the weltering grain,
Or Boreas o'er white wolds; and all I feel
I would fling far and wide, nor counterchange
This dower for worlds. But yet I would not pain
A gentle heart, nor mar the common weal.

TO THEE, O SUN!

To thee my season's toil I dedicate
O Sun, who dost the lingering winter's gloom
Enamel with the flushing apple-bloom,
And freak the fields with flowers passionate
When June is full; who dost delineate

The hills with pale-blue shadows, and illume
With argent light the vale, the errant flume,
And all the wealth of Summer's high estate.
Then with what red and gold dost thou brocade
Rich Autumn's robe, when days are near divine,
And nights are chill with winter's warning breath!
How opulent the colors ere they fade!
Oh, could but mortal hours so splendid shine
As these transcendent hues before their death!

THE TAINT OF GOLD

I.

'Tis not so much vast Wealth that I deplore
With all its pageantry of silly show,
The liveried clowns, the shams, the jeweled glow
From purchased brows, the overbrimming store
That only aggravates the lust for more:
Not Wealth so much, which, as the ages grow
In wisdom 'tis my fondest hope will flow
More equal o'er the world than heretofore.
But this the Pity, this the eternal Shame,
That golden holdings loose the meanest traits
In him that hath, in him that hath them not!
The Parasite will ever seek the flame
That warms and gilds and aye degenerates:
But must we see our very Flower rot?

II.

If frequently a fierceness rules my verse,
And if too oft at human flaws I rail,
And sterner days, and simpler life bewail,
And bane of noxious gold too shrilly curse;
Think not, good friends, that I would not immerse
Myself at times in perfumed airs, nor sail
On untossed seas, nor bathe in moonbeams pale,
Nor bask in rays unclouded suns disperse.
But oh, ye balmy Airs, ye unheaved Seas,
Ye Splendors of the great and lesser light,
Are ye not sweeter to the saner soul?
Do ye not make the glorious Day more bright,
And garb the Dark with lovelier mysteries,
When Life is sometimes hard, but always whole?

A FALLEN, TRUSTED FRIEND

I.

Comrade, oh, why beneath a star malign
Didst thou to unaffectionate impulse yield?
Surely thou couldst not think I would not shield
Thee in thy strait from punishment condign?
Oh, why, good Friend, didst thou not make some sign?
Hadst thou to former guileless days appealed,
Hadst thou thy former sweeter self revealed,
I should have left thy crime to courts divine.
But thou wert silent in thine awful shame,
Nor opedst the door that waiting stood ajar,
To close again upon thy guilt unknown,
To give thee chance to clear thy tarnished name,

To keep the carpings of the world afar,
To wrestle with thy perjured soul alone!

II.

The wise, the just, the virtuous all said,
"Wouldst thou a flagrant felony compound?
Nay, 'tis thy duty to the State to hound
The villain to a judgment merited.
List not the heart, but rather heed the head:
Upon the Commonwealth blinked crimes redound,
Like sundering surges on a ship aground,
Till every plank be splintered to a shred."
Yet hast thou then no claims O pleading Heart?
They say not so. Alack! I can pretend
No anger at the deed; no rancor mars
The old-time, gracious memories; no part
Have I in others' wrath. My friend, my friend,
Oh, must I see thee pale behind strong bars?

III.

Alas! I saw thee guarded, pale indeed,
Along with ribald rogues and waifs obscene,
Standing distinguished, if ashamed, between
The agents of the Law. And they did lead
Thee thus before the judge, and thou didst plead
A "guilty"—oh, thank God!—and all thy mien
Was penitent: withal thou wert serene
As he who wins at last his dreaded meed.
In moments of emotion one doth fling
All meditated act or speech or thought,
As parched sciroccos fling the Lybian sand
Into dun air. E'en so abrupt did wing
My purpose preconceived: for when I caught
Thy desperate eye—I grasped thee by the hand!

IV.

And later when brow-based thou didst appear
Before the judgment seat to take thy doom
In that guilt-garnished, unimpassioned room,
I spake low words into the judge's ear,
Imploring clemency: "For many a year —
Aye, ever since the far-off boyish bloom
Did flush his cheek, and Youth his eye illume —
He hath been loyal friend to me and dear;
Yea, honorable too, and arch-upright,
And faithful to my worldly interest,
To everything that did advantage me,
Ontil he was enmeshed in fiend-spun night:
Oh! let his worst be balanced by his best * * *
What hast thou said, O Judge, that he is free?"

V.

So thou art satisfied, O Heart, and thou,
O clamorous Right, hast won thy legal due!
Alas! It seemeth that I never knew
The hardness of the just who disallow
All frailty; of the pure who to Christ vow
An untried life, nor take his kindlier view —
"To others what ye would that they to you":
Alas! I never dreamed these things till now.
Hadst thou been rich, old Friend, and robbed the poor
To minister to some bedizzened need,
I would have tracked thee into blackest Hell!
But poverty from righteous ways did lure
Thee to a fate so oft the pauper's meed.
Had I been poor as thou?—ah, who can tell!

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Take no exception to the instrument
That fired our fathers through the bitter cold
Of wintry rout and sufferance untold;
Nor plead it was not their entire intent
To sanctuary all; nor yet invent
Some deft interpretation, nor withhold
Its large beneficence, nor try to mould
Its language to a purport different.
It had but one intent, the manifest—
That none should domineer by pedigree,
Or privilege of caste, or right of race—
That all were equal born by God's just grace,
Tawny or black or white from East to West,
Or bred on peaks, or by the awful sea!

RUSSIA–JAPAN, 1904

[Before the Issue.]

O God, give overwhelming Victory
To these brave dusky warriors of the East!
Oh, now vouchsafe to them—thou who hast leased
Them life—by their avenging agency
To lower the white man's pride! Aye, bend his knee
In suppliance awhile, O War's high Priest
Until his hateful insolence hath ceased,

Until he learn all Birth's equality!
What miserable cant we daily hear
Of Liberty and universal Love!
Forsooth our alien brother is most dear
When he is far below—and we above.
Fell God of War, that needed lesson teach
Which all Philosophy can never reach!

RIGHTEOUS WRATH?

Forgive, kind friends, if I o'errave or curse,
And only seem to harp upon the bad,
And to the universal discord add
My tuneless raillery of jarring verse;
For I would rather sing in numbers terse,
And sweep the strings with inspirations glad,
Descant on happy themes, evade the sad,
And all my being in pure joy immerse.
When Storm portends and hail-charged clouds uproll,
When moaning thunders bruit a coming hell,
The vintager in terror hastes to toll
In clanging discord the parochial bell.
If I foresee the storm that quails my soul,
And clang harsh, brazen chords—is it not well?

ECLIPSE

A glorious cloud floats nobly o'er the sky
This fulgent morn when but to breathe is joy:
Soft, siren gales its gleaming mists convoy
Above the checkered fields of mellow rye
And myriad grasses red of ripe July:

The purest, whitest thing without alloy!
But lo! a darker cloud that doth destroy
Its brilliance, o'er its face sweeps slowly by.
E'en thy sweet soul, dear Love, so chaste, so white,
That beams to me clear rays of happiness —
Like yon bright cloud upon its azurn sea —
Methinks must have its hours of irksome night,
Since every now and then I note some stress
Eclipse its prevalent serenity.

REVULSION

One autumn morn on my glad way to thee,
When softest mist was toyed by mildest breeze,
I saw two metamorphosed, sumptuous trees;
The one pure gold in its integrity,
From all despoiling dross completely free;
The other red, like velvet Genoese
Wrought for a Monarch's mood—fit harmonies
For Titian's taste—a painter's jubilee!
But when I found thy welcoming door was barred,
And thou hadst flown to some far alien scene,
The red stared tawdry in mine eyes, and jarred
Upon the vulgar gold; while what had been
A combination sweet seemed harsh and hard —
A gaudy blazon on the hills of green.

THE LIGHT BEYOND

They say that every cloud is silver-lined,
However swart or baleful it may be,
That on its further face propitiously
The placid sunbeams lie, and that behind
The terror of the dark, there dwell enshrined
In opaled tints, from every shadow free,
All peace, all gladness, all complacency.
Oh, come thou then, oh, come, most mighty wind,
And with thy whirling energy revolve
That yonder black and soul-dejecting cloud!
Oh, come thou then, and all its night dissolve
To orient bloom! Come thou and lift the shroud
That like a cerement wraps my abject heart,
And thine own puissant spirit to it impart!

GOLDEN SILENCE

In the cool morning shade of classic trees—
The low green shade of immemorial time,
That with the Latin skies makes sweetest rhyme,
And tames the torment of the August breeze—
I loiter through the scarred frivolities
Deep-glazed by age; and mossy ramps I climb,
And gaze into fresh pools of hues sublime,
While naught there is that may the eye displease.
And sapphired peacocks, iris-necked and sleek,
Flaunt near me in their sumptuous, jeweled dress,
Like some fair, fastuous women whom I know,
Who make in gay attire gayest show,
Who radiate all joy and loveliness,
And as the peacocks—perfect—till they speak!

ON READING WHITTIER'S LIFE

There is on earth, I think, no sadder sight
Than man in an unbeautiful decay
Of what had been his shining, golden day,
Waiting disheartened for the blurring night.
All toil, all hardship is the intrinsic right
Of fair-limbed Youth on his transcendent way
Parnassus-ward. But oh, with what dismay
We watch his fall ere he attain the height!
Thine was the sweeter lot, O virtuous Bard,
In age mature to gain the laureled crest,
And timely reap from thy devotions hard —
Thy thorny years—the meed of flowerful rest.
And thou didst hear upwaft the high regard
Men held for thee, and see thy sowing blest.

VETERAN BORES

I've known some gnarly gaffers in my day —
Insistent, selfish, reminiscent bores,
Shrilling amain like strident orators,
Until their meekest listeners slink away
As lambkins shorn from Boreas' boisterous play.
Oh, can it be before I touch the shores
Of Letheland, that what my soul abhors
'Twill flaunt unblushing in its sad decay?
But yet I know some sweet, serene old men
Who hold fair speech with each degree of age,
Who have a courteous eye for current things,
And deem the now as virtuous as the then;
Who cheerful make their thorny pilgrimage;
Who seem on earth to grow their heavenly wings.

A MASQUERADER

One whom I knew but in a casual way,
And looked upon as an unbelled buffoon —
A sort of merry-andrew who might soon
Become a social pest should I betray
A civil interest in his boorish play —
Once bravely came to me, and asked the boon
Of audience. "If not inopportune,
Pray give an ear to what I have to say.
My jest is but a masquerading mood
To hide the pain that racks an anguished frame.
If I have overplayed, or been o'errude,
Good friend, whom I esteem, forgive the same:
Forgive, forget, and earn my gratitude."
Hot tears stood in his eyes: in mine burned shame!

A VISITANT

Would that our heavenly dreams might prove to be
The harbingers of yearned-for actual things,
Odórous with the aura sweet Sleep brings,
And Sleep alone! Last night thou cam'st to me
In all thy grace, as I remember thee,
Resplendent like the shining morning's wings,
White as the mist that to the summit clings,
Fragrant as flowers that diaper the lea.
But yet upon thy lips there dwelt a sigh
In lieu of smiles, and in thine eyes lodged tears —

Great tears that thy large orbs did amplify —
Seeming to voice thy griefs, thy hopes, thy fears.
Oh, can it be that through the abraiding years
Thou too hast suffered—suffered e'en as I?

ON SPRINGTIDE EVES

On springtide eves when "Berenice's Hair"
Flames near the zenith of the doming sky,
When every star like Aphrodite's eye,
Rays love upon the blossom-laden air;
Ah, then my being's purpose I declare,
O dearest Muse—my only mission high
Is to commune with thee until I die —
With thee, my laurel-browed, without compare!
What boot the strivings for a crown of gold,
If with the golden-crowned my ways must be?
Why should I quest for guerdons manifold,
If they bring naught but height of pride to me?
Sweet, deathless one, I would in sooth grow old,
If I might live engarlanded by thee.

OH, HEED NOT SOUL!

Oh, heed not soul, the things that be awry,
Nor in thine anger justified declaim
Against the trickster's methods that defame
Our country's honor, nor in wrath outcry
Upon the horrors that torment the eye,
Nor overharp upon the sanctioned shame

That money-mongers bring upon our name,
E'en though the Right thine ire doth ratify!
Shall not thy sweeter will, O soul, be done
If thou unvexed dost champion Beauty's cause?
If with the favors that thy toil hath won
Thou laud'st the glory of her lovely laws?
Be not rude Boreas in thy shrilling lay,
But rather Zephyr in his balmy play.

ARS IMMORTALIS

With apathy I hear the moving tale
Of glorious Greece beneath Byzantium's rule,
Whose pettiest exploits when a boy at school
Spelled my alertest ear, and still exhale
Parnassian strains. Whether the Goth prevail
Or Saracen, or Plague like a foul ghoul
Ravin her corpse, or the rank ridicule
Of Slav and Vandal her sweet fame assail —
I care not; for it is her art supreme
I loved and love—her wondrous art alone;
Since all the rest from that pure fountain springs.
So will it ever be. That which we deem
Of mightiest import will like chaff be blown,
Unless we weight it with immortal things!

LANDOR

When I would seek a literary guide,
Lost in the labyrinths of verbosity,
Or cloyed with sugared preciosity,
I take a book forever at my side,
And in full confidence I ope it wide,
Assured that on whatever page there'll be
Some noble thought as monumentally
Expressed, as it were carved in stone. Thy pride,
Thy righteous indignations, aye, thine ire
Indocile Landor, all I reverence.
I love to feel the heat of thy fierce fire
Downwrit in terms of classic continence.
Like Milton thou didst smite no cringing lyre —
Thou, too, didst pass in manly indigence.

TO TOLSTOI

[On reading his Life.]

For him who would not live an anchorite
In some incarcerated solitude,
To imitate Christ's life were to delude
His saner self. Yet it were well to fight
For high ideals—if smitten, not to smite;
To turn the angry with the sweeter mood;
To share the glebeman's toil, to eat his food;
To spread with tongue and pen the gospel light.
This thou hast done. But oh, what must have been

The unexpressed disheartenment to see
Thy second self, and thine own seed remiss
In all that was most sacrosanct to thee —
Aye, see it with a countenance serene!
Was Christ's grave cross more hard to bear than
this?

SOME JAPANESE PAINTINGS

[Of the new School.]

How delicate, refined, withal so slight,
Are these sweet pictures from the new Japan —
Mere airy floatings, like the winds that fan
A lilied field, and vague as mists of night,
Or early dawn that take the roseate light!
Yet not all vagueness; for the artisan
Some loved detail (as only artists can)
Has wrought to highest pitch, and placed a-right.
A fair, suggestive, decorative whole!
Not "Nature's self," but nature seen afar
Through half-veiled eyes—through some true
Poet's soul,
As dreamlike as an unsubstantial star —
A May-time petal poising in the air,
Translucent, perfumed, exquisite, and rare!

GUIDO'S AURORA

I love the fresco still, nor does it tire.
Say it is classic, say the taste is cold,
That these broad-shouldered Hours are of a mould,
That not sweet life, but sculpture did inspire;
Yet see with what nobility they gyre
Linked hand with hand in raiments manifold —
A splendid garland to the god of gold !
And see the heavenly boy who bears the fire !
A lovely composition without fault —
A tuneful synthesis of draped and nude
That must the chastened fancy aye exalt.
And note how charming is the narrow view,
Beneath the lifting vapors' altitude,
Of hill and tree and tower, and Ocean's blue.

ON A LANDSCAPE BY OLD HARPIGNIES

"The classic beauties have not passed," I said,
When I beheld the sombre opulence
Of deep-bronzed, clustered trees, whose foliage dense
Loomed massive on the sapphired skies o'erhead,
With many a candid, breezy cloud bespread.
Between their immemorial boles immense
Broke glimpses of Arcadian lands, from whence
Sweet siren-songs might scale, and tenanted,
Mayhap, by fauns and white-limbed oreads.

Oh, what a joy so fair a scene imparts
To well-schooled, tasteful eyes! How it endears
Anew the eternal past; and how it glads
All faltering, hopeless, death-approaching hearts
This glorious work of more than fourscore years!

THE RICH MAN'S NEED

Alack! we bleared philanthropists concern
Ourselves o'ermuch with culture of the poor,
Esteeming this a panacea sure
For all the ails that in the State sojourn.
And yet the laborers who sorely earn
Their daily wage, at least all cant abjure,
And are sincere, albeit they endure
A loveless life—too loveless oft to learn.
Nay, we must educate the unsane rich —
Pretentious, with disnatured sympathies —
Dull as proverbial water in the ditch —
All silly affectation! Ah, here lies
Our task—to use the pedagogic switch
On Midas' back, until we make *him* wise.

FROM OBLIVION

With soulless toil and conscience-sacrifice
They raise—these Crœsus-men—their golden pile
In flash, bombastic, pure Plutonic style —
Equipped with every mechanism nice,
With every latest science-born device

Of luxury—that lasts a little while,
Then fleets. But oh! they cannot reconcile
Themselves to pay mere passing riches' price —
Oblivion. And so it comes to be,
In order their remembrance to ensure,
Some marvel-thing by genius they secure
And place it in a fane, where men may see
Their names associate with the glorious poor
Who are enthroned in immortality.

ANCESTRY

I.

What man is there who rouseth more our scorn
Than that void, gilded fool who grossly feeds
On forbear-glory? or the oaf that needs
The radiance from a far-off, splendent morn
To light his sunless, waning day forlorn?
But as for him who hungereth for deeds,
Who to an honorable name succeeds,
Who would an ornate history adorn —
What sharper goad than keen desire to peer
The flight of ancestors, and wing as high
Into the vaulting empyrean clear?
With tensioned neck he hears their eagle-cry,
"Up unto us—up to our towering sphere."
And he flings back, "Yea, even so will I."

II.

What if he have no glorious ancestor?
And if no morning sun illume his day,
Nor guide him with its true, inspiring ray?

What if no forbear-eagles, from their frore
And gleaming lofts upon the azure, pour
Their piercing, kindling song? Oh, then I say
He must his hard-won faculties display,
And unhallooed up to the zenith soar.
Thence down the run of the swift lapsing years
Will he his emulating offspring see,
And hear his epic-chant mid women's tears
And men's sonorous, hot, unenvious cheers,
And happy know his laureled name to be
A spur to good—a bar to infamy!

TO PASSATA

I touched thy kinsman's hand; and instantly
My long-chilled being felt a grateful glow!
If a vicarious touch can kindle so,
What tropic ardors would envelop me
Should thy dear hand clasp mine—should Fate decree
That after dreary years of separate woe,
Once more where lovers' crimson roses blow,
Thou shouldst swear faith to me, and I to thee!
And yet I would not ever meet thee more:
It might be that the years have torn the light
From out thy flaming eyes. Now as of yore
I see thy radiant presence benedight:
And if thine orbs did gleam with light before,
Each year they burn a thousand times more bright.

MOURNERS

We talk of minor things irrelevant
To what predominates in our sore hearts —
Of Nature's shifts, of letters, of the arts,
The health of States and politicians rant —
But not a moment does our speech supplant
The ruling thought. And while no tear-gleam starts
From thine impassioned eye, yet grief imparts
To thy calm face a hue significant.
For she to thee in sooth, was all in all,
Helpmate and wife and mother of thy home;
To me she was the gracious, kindly friend
Whose voice from out the past will oft recall
The cheerful hours, wherever I may roam.
But, oh, what love-words she to thee will send!

FROM PARADISE

She came to me last night and sadly said,
"I am not happy with the souls that dwell
Amid the amaranth and asphodel —
Pure, sexless, white-robed ones who never wed,
Who roam the Elysian fields all overspread
With choicest bloom, or down some arbored dell,
Where never carillons the marriage-bell,
Where ne'er are heard grave knollings for the dead.

For I would share with thee the praise, the jeers,
And ecstasies of brief terrestrial love;
And I would voyage with thee o'er stormy meres,
And shaggy, briered ways, when stars above
Are spent; then wouldst thou calm my quivering fears,
Gleaming a god to me through glistening tears."

LINES WRITTEN IN STOCKBRIDGE

I.

All gentle hearts must feel the rural grace
Of these harmonious hills that rim a sky
Pavilioned with soft shaded clouds which lie
In utmost languor on the windless space.
Sweet valleys open at their wooded base,
Mottled with tawny grass and golden rye,
With wandering willow-brakes that certify
The furtive streams, and all their windings trace.
And if perchance a jocund Zephyr rush
Across the vales, and bend the grasses low,
Until they seem gold waves of weltering sea;
Or if against the willow-wands he brush
Till all their silvery under-leaves they show —
What blither scene than this on Earth can be?

II.

'Tis afternoon: from out the rumbling west
There ominous looms a dark, conglobing cloud,
Spreading o'er ridge and dale its purple shroud.
Now birdlings seek a safe, sequestered nest
While yet the air is hush, and winds at rest.

The purple turns to dun, and crashes loud
Peal overhead, and stanchest trees are bowed,
While naught but nearest things are manifest.
The wrath has passed, and quiet holds the air
So lately torn by fierce, diluvial rain;
And freshened earth its redolence expels.
The glowing western skies are mute and fair,
While gently wafts across the sparkling plain
The pensive carillon of vesper bells.

III.

The storm and sunshine both alike are dear
In this lush country of embowered hills,
Whose modest history the mind fulfills
With many an image picturesque. 'Tis here
E'en where I write the Indian chief sincere
His wigwam rears; the farmer-soldier drills
On yonder village sward; and there he thrills
To his high theme the preacher-pioneer
Who shows the red-man Christ. All this is gone;
Yet there are pleasing remnants of the past —
A whitened steeple gleaming mid the green;
A Doric-columned porch that glares upon
The leafy road; and sombre pines that cast
Deep shadows on a mounded garth serene.

IV.

Yes, gracious Landscape, modest History,
That tranquillize the over-restless mind!
Yet there are throbbing moments when I find
Its loveliness an insufficiency,
Its legends starved; and then I yearn to be
In some heroic land—a land designed
In larger way, with larger deeds entwined —

A fitting theatre for an epopee.
And I would see no whitened, wooden spire,
Nor shafts impoverished, but nobler things —
Great Parian columns capped with beaming gold,
And massive domes, and purfled towers that tire
The straining, upturned eye, and all that springs
In Life and Art from genius manifold!

V.

Again, when in more solemn mood I feel
That soon immeasurable Time will end
My short-spanned life; oh, then these hills transcend
The loftiest peaks; these placid vales reveal
A lushness unapproached; these rills appeal
More movingly than floods: these legends lend
Their quiet charm, while porch and steeple blend
With those soft dreams that o'er my spirit steal.
And though it matter not where our scant dust
May find finality; whether it blow
O'er far-off alien fields; or yet may lie
Fathom on fathom deep; or friends entrust
It to the grave; albeit this I know —
Yet do I long in these sweet lands to die.

THE GOLDEN BOND

England! you stand for Commerce—not alone;
Your adamantine hulks plough every sea
Convoying in the name of Liberty
Great argosies of gold. In every zone
You set your goddess on her gem-wrenched throne,

Awhile you prate of blest philanthropy.
England ! you stand for Commerce—so do we,
Leal children who the mother ne'er disown.
This is the bond between us—gold, god Gold —
Not friendship. What can worshipers of caste
Care for the common breeds who would uphold
The lack of it—a brotherhood unclassed ?
Aye, long as Commerce shall be aureoled,
So long our vaunted " friendship " will be fast !

O SOUTH !

Reluctantly, O South, I take the pen
To give to conscience-thoughts clear utterance.
God knows I would not jauntily advance
A strife-engendering tenet, nor again
Convert calm brothers into wrangling men !
Yet call to mind thy fateful arrogance,
O South, that shivered thine heroic lance —
Oh, be not ever more as thou wert then !
Remember now the awful cost of war,
Its horrid harvest and the aftermath !
Tread not again its red enmired path,
But let sweet Justice be thy counselor !
Whatever may thy *social* preference be,
Stand thou, O South, for *civic* Liberty !

THE REMEDY

Not easily evaded Law will cure
The villainy of men who cumulate
Vast wealth upon the wreck, the wrath, the hate
Of plundered brother man. What guard is sure
Against the craft omnipotent to lure
With ostentation of its savoury bait
The church, the virgin, aye, the very state?
What strength 'gainst such temptation shall endure?
And yet there is a guard, and simple too —
That all the decent world entreat this pack
Of monster thieves as it knows how to do
The lesser knaves—not doubtfully attack
Them through the courts—but give them ample view
Of its contemning, ostracizing back!

AND THEN?

From day to day heart-sickened do we read
Of rank chicanery in the market-place,
Till lauded "Business" doth connote disgrace
In honest eyes, while "Barter" seems to breed
Naught but corruption. Whither will it lead
The flaccid scions of a sturdy race —
To what black deeps of infamy abase,

This cursed lust of gain—this bullion greed?
In unenlightened times to be in trade
Was deemed by uncult, blazoned men a blight;
Because they held that dealing *must* degrade—
That bartering must their chivalry benight.
O lettered Moderns, can it really be
That those rude barons rightlier judged than we?

VOYAGES

Those mariners who took the awful sea
Of Hope or Horn to ply their parlous trade—
Who dared the hurricane and pirate's blade,
Or confiscation on some paltry plea
By licensed guardians weaponed cap-a-pie,
Or balmy islands' savage ambuscade—
At least their fortune wrecked, or fortune made
In a firm-knitted, friendly company.
But I upon my ventures for the gain
Of wider knowledge, or an art more chaste,
Or rightlier mode of life, and who would fain
Consort with many of a kindred taste—
Alas! I find the further I attain,
The lonelier is my voyage upon the waste.

IF I MIGHT KISS THY SOUL!

I wish that I might rapturous kiss thy soul
As I so often kiss thy features sweet;
Then would my happiness be aye complete!

For I should grim, deflowering Time cajole,
And cheat the blasting years that careless roll
O'er thy dear head; while at thy cherished feet
I should forever utter phrases meet
For a first flame—and Love would have no goal.
Yea, I would kiss the Joy that vivifies
Thy smile, with greater fervor than thy lips:
My kiss upon thy Kindness would eclipse
The one impressed upon thy glorious eyes;
And I would kiss thy Truth as even now
I kiss the splendor of thy flawless brow!

IN AUTUMN

O Summer, Summer, come again to me!
Oh, let me feel the warmth that vivifies!
Oh, let me breathe the aura from thy skies,
And scent again the flowerful, fragrant lea
Basking 'twixt shady hills. Oh, let me see
Thine intertwining emerald harmonies,
Which make of our poor earth a paradise,
Where blessed angels well might long to be!
O Love, O Love, return thou here once more!
Return, I pray, and let me sun awhile
In those sweet sultry charms that I adore—
Warm, answering lips and limbs, and glowing smile,
With eyes that have in song no metaphor,
And all the wordless graces that beguile.

THE BARDS ENDURE

There looms a column on Ferrara's square
Intended for a petty despot's fame:
But circumstance forbade. It then became
The aerie of a pope, who nested there
More than a century, until the air
Resounded with the shout of Freedom's name;
Whereon sweet Liberty encrowned the same
For three short years, and then the shaft was bare—
Ungarnished by the royal Austrian's hate.
Anon the statue of an Emperor
Throned over it, until his fallen state
Left the lone column widowed as before.
Since then a bard hath weathered nations' fate,
For aye aloft doth Ariosto soar!

NOT YOUTH ALONE

Not Youth alone hath privilege to sing
Of Love's fierce throes. It may be competent
To lute a young heart's wild astonishment
At new-born ecstasy, and joys that spring
From handseled sense, or languishments that bring
A first unmutual flame. It may give vent
To exaltations, fresh and innocent
As dovelings' bliss upon their maiden wing.
But passions like the storm-clouds come and go:

The white-flecked azure follows on the black,
While heavens swoon and meadows sleep below;
Anon the dark, impetuous clouds whirl back.
Who but the practiced registrar shall say
Which turmoiled cloud-burst made the stormier day?

THE TOUCHSTONE

When my sad spirit weepeth as the skies
That o'er the swaying, moaning forests lower;
When every minute draggeth like an hour,
And a disordered vision magnifies
Each petty contretempts, until it rise
A veritable ill; when every power
With which indulgent Nature doth endower
The virile human frame, enervate lies —
Oh, then it is I seek the needful zest
In soothing, fortifying, lifting song!
Oh, then it is there comes the crowning test
Of what in verse is lovable and strong!
And then it is to me *that* lyre seems best
Which makes the interminable day less long!

LIVING CLASSICISM

Not a dead past those groves of Helicon
Where Phœbus twined his sweet, triumphant lyre
With laurel ever green, to lead the quire
Of Muses mine; nor those calm forms that shone
From out the color-glowing Parthenon —

Nay, but a quickening *present* that doth fire
The reverent soul of him who would aspire
To found his not unlasting art upon
Incomparable taste! So marvelous
Is this our vital vision of the antique;
So free from actual defects! 'Tis thus
We image to ourselves a thing unique—
A flawless dream—more beautiful to us
Than ever to the beauty-loving Greek!

"THE LAST STRAW"

I saw two woodmen hew a giant tree
With constant arm, while each alternate blow
Worked nearer to its pending overthrow.
The air was quiet as a halcyon sea,
And every axe-stroke rang athwart the lea.
At last the merest shred of core did show
Beneath the mighty, branching trunk: yet lo,
The Giant stood in all his majesty!
Thereat a Zephyr, scarcely strong enough
To bend the willow-withes that marged the meads,
Frisked round the field, and with a sportive puff
Crashed down the stately mass. Ah, he who reads
May know too well how oft some slight rebuff
Will topple o'er a Babel of misdeeds!

LIFE'S AUTUMN

If one could break before the hour supreme
Into transcendent glory as the leaves
That tender-kirtled, comely Spring conceives,
That summer ripens to a deeper scheme,
That Autumn raises to a pitch extreme!
How splendid are the harmonies she weaves
Before white winter ruthlessly bereaves
Her of this dazzling, aureate color dream!
Should not the autumn of an earnest life
Increase in splendor with increasing years?
Its purpose in a glorious blaze fulfill,
Intensely colored by the weathered strife —
Its jubilations, agonies, and tears?
In sooth it should—*if one but had the will.*

STUDIO-BOUND

The timeliest, sweetest rain did close the door
To labor in the gold and purple field;
And I, abandoned to what raptures yield
The god-born bards, did o'er those verses pore
Where wise Ulysses on the Stygian shore
Communed with shrilling shades that round him wheeled.
And, oh, how sad it was when he revealed
Himself to her—her—who his great heart bore!
Another bard I chose, and it chanced so

I read Carducci's dream—Letitzia's shade,
Standing upon her threshold wan with woe,
When skies crepuscular to blackness fade,
Stretching her arms above the savage sea.
Her sadder plight brought sadder tears to me.

VEXATIONS.

Oh, could I but command the Wisdom high
To bear with waspish trifles that abound
Throughout the shining day, and oft confound
The sweet-paced hours of Sleep that pacify!
What shame it is my fancy to deny
Its exercise, which might to Fame redound,
Yet wastes itself as doth a furious hound
Absurdly snapping at a teasing fly!
If I could but command it!—not the mask
Of a serenity that seems to be
Spontaneous—oh, not for that I ask,
But heart-core calm, alike the deeps of sea.
Is this, forsooth, a superhuman task?
Is this an altitude too high for me?

MURAT'S DEATH

It might have been a yester tragedy
So deeply was I moved. Oh, what an end
For one who did in gallantry transcend
The squadroned world—whose plumes were guarantee,

Fronting the flashing ranks, of Victory!
For these same jeweled plumes they did contend,
The brigands! and his pageantry did rend,
And his proud person foul, hard by the sea
Laving Calabrian shores! Against a wall
They backed him in a gloomy cell, so small
That he upgathered in his reaping arm
The muskets to his heart, lest they should harm
His warrior face—a flash—his soul was flown.
And this to keep a Bourbon on his throne!

"THE SOCIAL FABRIC"

The social Fabric? What a structure mean!
Low-linteled are the doors, their span too strait
For ingress of a lofty thought or great:
And narrow are the windows, pierced, I ween,
To give an issue to the air unclean,
And all the inner foulness liberate.
Drawn, too, are all the shades to violate
God's clarity, and Satan's work to screen!
Within no light of heaven. Jet on jet
Of guarded glare doth glamourously shine
On fards and falsities: but none regret
The truer, sweeter, purer ray divine
In this perverted domicile. And yet
We hallow it, as though it were a shrine!

E. H. W.
[S. J.]

He gave his all to God, and joined that band
Which heeds no danger-beacon here below,
Which for His glory wrestles with the foe
From drear Alaska to Van Diemen's Land,
Its fiery zeal by Christ's own breathing fanned,
Making thereof no individual show,
No selfish vaunt, but laboring all aglow
With fealty to the Order's stern command.
I rarely saw him, yet his mien is clear,
Refined by book and vigil, speaking soft
With accent sweet, as he who hath no ear
For worldly brawls, and who by walking oft
With tuneful souls in visions doth appear
Like one of those calm saints who dwell aloft.

SAINT FRANCIS
["Mortem cantando suscepit."]

Sweet poet Francis, every genuine bard
Must feel thine inspiration as his own.
In ravening, plundering ages thou alone
Didst chant the law of Love, and lesson hard
Of Poverty. And thou didst aye regard
All nature as thy kin. To him who shone
For thee by day, enthralled, thou didst intone
Thy praise. And all the firmament bestarred,
The clouds and bitter wind were dear to thee;

And fearful fire was beautiful and strong;
E'en thou didst laud thy "sister" Death in song!
Sweet brother, may as thine my ending be —
When swiftly ebbing days seem drear and long —
To sing myself into eternity!

TO BERENICE

Men call the star by a less lovely name,
But in my agony I gave it thine,
Dear Berenice. From thy realms divine —
Where day and night are but the eternal same —
I love to think that thy pure earth-spent flame
Doth on my groping desolation shine.
To me such thoughts are a sweet anodyne,
To me thy lustre is a heavenward aim.
When all the turmoiled world has gone to rest,
And light is dimming in the hemisphere,
I gaze into the regions of the blest,
Watching until the herald-star appear —
Till thy white, saintly soul is manifest —
Till thou, O Berenice, thou art here!

AT DEAD OF NIGHT.

I saw thee standing in celestial light
Brighter than argent beams of summer's noon,
Softer than softest rays of harvest moon
When first she launches on the void of night.
And thou didst stoop from thine immortal height

To take my nerveless hand, and whispered "Soon
The years will grant thy dearest, longed-for boon,
And thy reft heart with utter joy requite."
Thereon in gratitude I clasped thy feet,
Not daring yet to touch thine heavenly eyes;
For I had feared that in thy paradise
Thou mightst have mated with a soul more meet.
Then didst thou read my unexpressed surmise,
And chased the bitter thought with kisses sweet.

ESTIMATES

Just Death, thou standest by a lonely grave,
And to thy handmaid Praise dost solemn say,
"I see no laurel on this headstone gray,
Moss-masked, obliterate, where rankly wave
Persistent weeds: Come, Maiden, make it brave
With lustrous leaves that know not sere decay,
That ever to Parnassian breezes sway,
The leaves that Phœbus to immortals gave."
Then turn'st thou to her sister, hard Dispraise,
"What mean those garlands on yon sumptuous tomb?
Those sculptured frets, the fulsome phrase on phrase?
Wrench off the chaplets! with thy wrath consume
The pomp and lie!—Hold! rather let them blaze
A beacon to the builders. 'Tis their doom."

THE "CENTURY"

Kind, steadfast friends? Oh, yes, we meet them there,
In that well-famed, selectest company,
That leafy islet on a sterile sea,
That lush oasis mid the reaches bare,
Uncultivate—the thirsting soul's despair!
Yet other haunts, and other groups there be
Where wit prevails with brilliant repartee;
And as for love—we have it everywhere.
Why is it then we hold the place so high?
For its fair culture? for its standard pure,
And those sweet mutual deeds that justify
Man's life? Oh, no, it is because the lure
Of gleaming gold hath not the power to buy
Predominance, nor Honor's forfeiture.

HEROES?

Each bore his part of genial eloquence
Around a board adorn with gleaming plate,
Where Church verged on the Law, and Law the State,
And where were trencher-men of excellence
With pen and brush. Then one in reverence
Did say, "who doth his talent dedicate
To Art in these commercial days ingrate
Stands forth a hero in soul eminence."

Oft have we faltered in our faith, dear Muse,
Not deeming our poor gifts could e'er suffice
To claim thy lustrous, heavenward roaming eyes;
Because the ungodlike world did oft refuse
Its lower gaze. Oh, can it really be
That, *heroes*, we abide on heights with thee?

TO AGE

Cling not like lonely fruitage to a tree
Bereft of its fair canopy of leaves!
Cling not to ghostly Memory that grieves
A pageant-past, and all the mad-cap glee
Of youthful circumstance! but rather be
Companioned to the flushing flower that cleaves
To bourgeoning boughs—to Spring that interweaves
Her tapestries upon the blooming lea.
Not age to age alone, as proverbs hold—
One vast sad harmony of pale decay
Voicing unheeded lore of purest gold;
But Age to Youth in its wild primal day,
That youth may share the wisdom of the old,
And age retain what years would wear away.

AT VESPERS

Oh, heed it not poor menial acolyte
That thou art but a gamin, gutter-bred!
For, as thou standest 'neath the radiance shed
From yonder altar-candles softly bright—
As is a love-charged moon on harvest night—

A cloud of incense swirling round thy head,
Thou seem'st a shining angel heaven-sped —
A raptured soul in garments lustrous white !
And so it is that some celestial thought —
Some deed that hath its root in paradise —
Will ecstasy an earthling's heart distraught
By selfish, soiling cares—will canonize
Unsaintly men mid worldly ways upbrought —
Will perishable flesh immortalize.

THE BEST BOOK

The book that in the hour of awful need
Doth solace most, that book I hold the best
In this o'erlettered world, while all the rest
Our vagrant curiosities but feed.
Oh, did I not this springtide morning read
How a dust-fallen emperor of the west,
When his heart-agonies were cruelest,
Did turn to a romance that he might lead
His anguished mind from off the gory gloom
Of a disastrous field, and meanwhile dream,
Until the white truce-flag should bring his doom ?
Ah, what availeth it to know the theme
Of that romance, its name, or yet by whom
'Twas writ—enough—it was the book supreme !

CHILL APRIL

I would not commerce with thee, Poesy
In these wild tardy days of spring, for fear
My spirit winter-scourged and ah ! so drear,
Should discord with thy heavenly harmony

Exacting numbers sweet. For mine would be
Prosaic as yon meadows dull and sere,
And sad as sand-dunes by the moaning mere,
And bitter as the dreams that harrow me.
Wait, wait, my gentle one, for soon will call
From out the soughing, roseate-budding wood,
The gleaming pool, the soft, green-girding lea,
Clear, quickening, urgent voices that would thrall
Even a boorish soul! Oh, then my mood
Will link its lute to thy pure minstrelsy!

BETTER SO!

In one of those sequestered bights of rest,
That off the churnèd tracks of commerce lay,
I chanced to make an anchorage to-day.
Upon a wall funereal wreaths expressed
His fellow-craftsmen's grief; and all the best
Of a young artist's life—just passed away
Ere hand could scarce the budding soul obey—
Beneath Death's blazonry were manifest.
Why should we grieve? is it not better so,
To pass in full effulgence of young hope?
To cease to be in young ambition's glow,
In ignorance of ripe achievement's scope?
Alas! the master veterans too well know
The hopeless dark through which arch talents grope.

COMPACTNESS

I showed a friend the treasures of a place
Wherein were housed the marvels of the hand
From every quarter of the artist-land,
From every inspiration of the race —
Religion, love, virility, or grace —
Of heavenly orient hues, and forms so grand
As wrought the sculptors of the Phidian band,
Or Angelo upon his vault did trace.
But when I asked "O friend, of all these things
That in the throngèd chambers thou hast seen,
Which is it that the foremost swiftly springs
Into thy memory, and full serene
Doth lodge within thy soul?" At once he said,
"That small gold coin with the consummate head."

"FALL CAMPAIGNS"—AN ORISON

What law have we transgressed that we should share
The fermentations of the "fall campaign"?
Good Lord, if we have foully sinned we fain
Would suffer as the saints: but oh, forbear
To drive us to the Thulé of despair
With "delegations," "platforms," and the bane
Of "nominating" fume, and fustian vain,
Infecting all the sweet autumnal air!
Oh, spare us, too, the bores that "notify"

In pompous words the prescient "candidate,"
And his "accepting" speech. If in thine eye
We favor find, just Lord, eliminate
The betting man, the fools that prophesy —
And all like nuisances, dear God, abate!

POLITICS

"To dicker with the devil"—that must be
The politicians' rubric—to adjust
The conscience to the overweening lust
Of lofty place or parish primacy.
Not only politicians! Yea, but he,
To whom a grateful Nation yields its trust
Is lured unto the act that would disgust
A soul who lives in high philosophy.
Kind hast thou been to me, my white-robed Muse,
To let me linger by Castalian springs,
To wander through thy laurel-clustered haunts,
And suffer me thy mateship pure to choose;
For now I soar o'er craft, as wingèd things
Soar o'er swart troops of feverish, futile ants!

AT ELECTION TIME

"You care not for your country's weal," they say,
Because I smile with bland indifference
At party cant, and miserable fence
Of hackneyed words, and everlasting bray
Of tonguester politicians who purvey

The sordid epithet, who shock the sense
With torrents of a nauseous eloquence,
Whose glory is the patriot's dismay.
Too well I love my land to lower my flight
From soaring peaks of ideality;
Too well I love the high celestial light
To redescend into a noxious night:
Dear Country! would that I might bring to thee
The sweet perfection I enraptured see

LONELY CHRISTMAS

Alone with household gods! while all mankind
With frenzied joy the day doth celebrate,
And not a soul appears to bear the weight
Of Memory save mine. Those wreaths combined
With jocund red, those gemlike toys enshrined
In lustrous green, the jets that scintillate,
The dazzling smiles, the sparkling eyes that mate
With stars—all, all of happier years remind.
Benignant gods!—dear faces grave and sweet,
Ye precious things it was their wont to use,
How tenderly my loneliness ye greet,
What warmth o'er all my chill ye soft diffuse!
So soon, so soon—but nay, it is not meet
That we should mar the day my sad-eyed Muse.

ROMAN PICTURES

Take them away! So hard is it to bear
The leaden thoughts these pictured scenes awake,
The loveliness that makes the heart to ache,

The yearned-for beauty that hath no compare —
Those opal hills that tremble in the air,
The lucid blue above the gold opaque
Of gleaming walls, the aqueducts that strake
The vast champaign—so barren yet so fair!
O stately pines, and cypress loved of those
Who seek the solemn note, O travertine
Storing the beams of years, O ilex dark
Whose groves the classic mysteries enclose,
Will ever ye surcease to be divine
To souls that kindle to the sacred spark?

THE ARCHER

O starry Sagittarius, bright Sign
Whose high effulgence rayed upon my birth,
Remorseless thou hast brought me neither mirth,
Nor solace of good cheer, nor love of wine
Or wassail, nor the ease of wealth. But mine
Hath been the briered portion of the earth —
Travail and strain, and ceaseless care, and dearth
Of mindless sleep, kind Nature's anodyne.
Great starry Archer, what doth mean for me
Thy tense-drawn bow? thy quivering shaft of fire
Which gleams in dark-blue fields eternally?
That I should bend my bow in pain, nor tire
Of futile shafts? Futile? Oh, it may be
That one will pierce the mark ere I expire!

DE SENECTUTE

How hard it is when Death is looming nigh,
And Life's thin thread hangs 'twixt the awful shears,
To pass with grace our residue of years;
When loveliness has left the glorious eye
Now filmed with shadowy ghosts that flutter by,
When fire is spent, when hopes become pale fears,
And smiles are metamorphosed into tears,
When boding vapors gloom our limpid sky.
And yet experience should guarantee
The ripest work, the amplest, richest, best:
Aye! we should strengthen to our latest breath
Could we but will it—*will* the energy:
Could we but tear from out our craven breast
The senseless, palsying fear of certain death!

CHARACTER STUDIES
AND
NARRATIVE POEMS

CHARACTER STUDIES AND NARRATIVE POEMS

THE MODEL

Of what an unimaginable blend
Is this our human integer! Although
Long years, propinquity, the bond of blood,
And closest scrutiny would seem to pledge
Us knowledge of 't, surprises never cease.
We think experience teaches Nature's laws;
That if in parching times we hear at night
The whippoorwill's set, mournful monody;
Or if well-versed in cloud-lore we behold
The striate rack—"mare's tail" the glebesmen
say—
Higher than Himalayas, then we think
There will be rain; or if again the wind
Veer suddenly from east to west and sweep
Great plumes adversely from the storm-capped
waves,
Bronzed seamen will predict an open sky.
But yet when tested signs prognosticate
Or fair, or wet, the surer mercury
Will oft confound our vaunted weather-ken.
Oh, what a goodly friend a gauger true
Of man's impenetrable soul would prove!—
Not of its angry cloud-bursts, or its heats
Of love or hate, since these give vanguard signs,

Which even careless watchers signalize;
But those deep thoughts that lie beneath its calm,
As unsuspected wreckage lies below
The level roof of the secretive sea.
Yet in default thereof we must keep on
Our annotating course, in hopes at least
That these our notings, if sincerely made,
May service some soul-student who would guess
The wherefore of its strangely errant ways.
At all events a character portrayed
Affords diversion to a curious few.
With this apology I portrait one
That chanced my way, and made me starkly stare;
And would have roused a laugh had there not been
(To use the terminology of coins)
A serious obverse to the trivial face.

Image, if you will, a stately girl,
In stature topping well the average man,
Who confidently walks into a room —
High-ceiled, north-lighted, decked with dusty casts,
Unfashioned clay, great half-wrought sheeted forms,
All dipped in that gray atmosphere which floods
A sculptor's lair—who unabashed observes
"I am a model: those who've worked from me,
And copied as they could my actual form,
Say I'm the best there is—and that is true.
My legs are splendid—long and elegant —
So are my arms—you cannot see a bone,
Just dimples at the joints." "Dian?" asked I.
"Oh, yes, the sculptors say so, and I've posed
For her. But then, you know, I also work

As a stenographer : and if by chance
An artist wants to use me in this way
I write his letters for him—they're not much
In that line—or at least it bores them so ! "
All this in commoner speech than I have writ —
Too racy even for unclassic verse —
The reader must enrich it with the spice
Of voguish, vulgar slang : I merely give
The gist of her unpunctuated talk.
" And you must know, too, that my family
Is fine—among the first in all the State.
(Thereon she gave an anticlimaxed name
That started in the skies to end in depths).
I left my country home when father died,
Because I like a free, bohemian life.
I'm studying for the boards, and know a man
Who runs a syndicate, that runs the stage.
He says I've got first-rate, dramatic stuff.
I'm only posing now to pass the time
Till I'm a full-blown actress, and to pay
For food and lodging." On the table lay
My open Milton, which I often scan
To give the pitch whene'er I would impart
A monumental air to some idea
Condensing in the concrete, plastic clay.
She took it up, and to my sheer surprise
Showed ken of it, and with a roaming glance
From off the page half-scrutinized, she gave
The sonnet " On his Blindness," and excerpts
From other immortalities : and then
She fingered favorite books that always lie
Within my arm's reach (overthumbed and soiled
With sculptors' grayish grime ; but white at core),
Reciting fragments that ne'er fail to fire.

"Great Cæsar!" cried I, "how on earth is it
You learned these things?" "In my Academy,"
Said she, giving a name magniloquent.
"Besides, you know, my mother taught at school,
And father had a lovely library,
And let me read his books when I was ill,
That being often; for I was not strong,
Nor tall, nor well-formed as you see me now—
But haven't you some work for me to-day?"
"Unfortunately not" (as on that day
I happened to be busy with the boots
And spurs of our great country's Father), "but
There are some women near at hand I know
Who paint or sculpture, possibly they need
A model, I will write a line for you."
"Women?—don't like them—only work for men."
And this the answer I have oft received
From comely maidens who have come to pose,
As far as I know virgin as the stars,
Nor yet unready to slip off their gear
(Which cost their nearly-all) for the small pay
That goes to purchase them. Why! I believe
If one should advertise for comely nudes,
His doors would be dammed up till dinner-time
With self-charmed women of all heights and hues,
Spanning the gamut ethical! Pray heed,
Good ladies, that I only say *believe*,
And merely reason in Baconian way:
For if I tell you that there once applied
For this ungarnished situation's work
A spectacled New England school-marm, who
Barring her spectacles was fine enough
To stand for Amaryllis—then I say
'Tis fair to urge my bold hypothesis.

But to our model. Just to draw her out
I asked if she were heart-enthralled or free:
Although to those who know not occult ways
It may be unbelieved that maidens trothed
(And even married women 'neath the rose)
Will increment their income in this wise —
This casting off the artificial skin:
Yet vangel truth it is. Whereat I learned
That she had been engaged a short time since
To some young fellow in a distant town:
But now that she had left him to pursue
Her varied vein, and do her uncramped will
(Her undressed will one might in satire say),
She found her freedom sweeter than his love;
And so had written him. I suavely asked
If liberty should not be propped by purse,
Or some propitious balance at the bank —
A goodly friend when all's inimical.
The laughing answer came that she "could work,"
And while she had not sixpence to the good,
She had no fear of drifting to the bad.
Then marking in my eyes a wearying look —
Since even pious listeners cannot bear
More than a modicum of monologue —
She moved reluctant towards the door. "Good-bye,
I'm sorry you've no work for me to-day,"
She said, "I want two dollars awfully."

Good reader, draw your moral as you will:
We sculptors are but men of temperament,
Having no proneness to psychology;
Nor care to carve a soul up, nor describe
The limitations of sex-energy,

Nor cast the future, when the women choose
The larger, rougher liberties of men.
We fellows are a wayward lot ourselves,
Nor would we trammel any tugging soul;
Because our business is to ferret out
Accommodating legs and arms and torse,
And make good statues. As for casuistries,
Soul-problems and the like—confound them all!

NUPTIAL CHOICE

I SAW her first from out penumbral aisles
Unpeopled, on a placid afternoon,
As she was pouring out celestial song
Inweaved with organ strains; and all I kenned
From my dim, unbeholden coign below
Was a cool silvery light like shivering dawn's
That drifted sidewise through an aperture,
Contouring with an argent filament
One half her graceful head—a lovely ear
Fair-lobed and nacreous, a songster's neck
On shoulders draped in weightless, gauzy white,
Such as the angels wear in art and verse.
No more could I perceive; yet I divined
What only glimmered unprecise in shade
To be consistent with the part illumed,
As we divine the full circumferenced glow
Of the ripe moon from its thin new-born arc.
And when into the empty church's night
Her song had died, she issued from the porch
Communing with a friend—her fervency
Yet lingering on her face, her mien a-glow

With music's fire, and a white smile to make
Abjuring, macerating men to fall —
Oh, then was divination verified!
But were she as the holy-one she seemed,
Or incarnation of demoniac snares
To tangle up in hell a lover's life,
'Twould not have qualified a whit my choice —
Nor mine nor any man's unbound by ties,
Or old or young: for youth and gravest age
Are well-paired dolts, ne'er looking at the sun
Of Beauty through Discretion's dusking glass.
Man takes a mate because he hotly loves.
If he deliberate—why, then Love's cool:
Cool Love's a paradox. And so we say
To every one who gaspeth in the snares
(Like netted gladiators scanning hard
The uncertain thumb), "God help thee, suffering friend."

The issue proved that God in sooth helped me.
Now many years have lapsed since then—sweet years
Of lasting bloom, of undeciduous joy.
Through her wise offices and wistful care
My house has thrived, my children have enhanced
Their fair name's heritage, and more than once
Have I escaped what seemed impending death,
And oft have held at bay that worse than death,
Incompetence to meet the daily task,
Or exercise of eager faculties.
If He should take her ere to-morrow's disk
Brushes in couchant hues around blue shades,
The memory of what has been would paint
In golden tones the residue of days
Gleaming about my shadowed widowhood.

'Twas Providence, not Choice deliberate,
Young friends, that turned me this well-rounded life;
Or if you will, good Luck—good Luck to you!

IN AN ARTIST'S STUDIO

[A Monologue]

Dost need a model for thy work to-day?
Or wouldst thou like to see and annotate
My figure for some future exigence?
No?—Not to-day?—nor yet for future days?
Thou givest me but scanty glance, because
My face attracts thee not. Thou dost not know
The ravishments that lie concealed beneath
This garb enforced. Should I discover them,
A marvel wouldst thou see of faultless form —
Not an anatomy submerged by pulp,
The beau-ideal of Fashion's votarists,
But subtle modelings announcing life,
And purpose of a woman's entity:
Here low reliefs just peering underneath
A garb of pearly, undulating flesh,
As some smooth, polished stone just variegates
The shining level of the shoreward sea;
There, dimples like the languid, whorling stream's
Looping through wide, recumbent, grassy lands —
Those two, for instance, so divinely wrought
Upon the back—upon the rising wave
Of splendid flesh that sweeps from out the waist,
And where the color passes to faint rose.

And thou shouldst see the gently springing hips —
No suddenness, or overcharge of mass,
But one sweet quiet curve from girth to knees
As pink as morn-flushed clouds, and feet alike
To unshod goddesses' who walk on mists,
Uncramped and full, and nacreous as a shell.
Thou starest at my words! Thou thoughtst I was
Mere animal! Wouldst know my history,
And why I'd pose for thee? *My* secret, that.
Wait but a moment's space—'tis quickly done.

* * * * * *

Look! Have I lied to thee? Hast lost thy speech?

CONCERNING WOMEN

It was our wont on summer afternoons
To stroll beneath centurial vaults of green
Ceiling the ample, navelike village road,
Or sit beneath a foliate dome of elms,
And feel upon our cheeks a fountain's spray
That zephyrs flung from off its cresting plumes;
Or, when the deeper gold of couching Sun
Glazed all the purple-shaded, placid land,
And made poor weeds to pass for haughty flowers,
To ramble o'er the level, cooling fields,
And breathe their grateful, earthy issuance.
Yet all the while we held a converse brisk
On matters that to us imported much.
But Clifford was more eloquent than I,

And glad to talk whenever he could find
Indulgent auditors to give him play,
Nor interrupt o'ermuch—though just enough
To stimulate, and keep him to the key.

One afternoon our conversation turned
On woman's preference—a theme to men
Insoluble as is the song of birds.
"How can these women," in his warmth he cried,
"These lovely women with their tastes refined
Bear up with men so coarse and money-mad,
Imbruted traders without heart to rise,
Paraders of their ways indelicate?
Just figure to yourself this state of things:
Here is a woman with intrinsic taste
For what is fair—an artist by her birth
With native eye for eurythmies of form
And color symphonies, with natural ear
For what is beautiful in speech and song—
Who only needs a guiding word or so
To comprehend and feel all harmonies,
Or prove the counter-shock of what discords.
Such guiding words are thronging everywhere;
Articulate in lecture; visible
In book and photograph; exhibited
In many a rich museum open-doored;
And audible in myriad concert-halls.
Aye, all these things *she* sees and hears and feels,
Being elated by their influence,
While *he*, her mate, is following baser bents;
Not having appetence for things that yield
No obvious return in property,
Nor taste for pleasures higher than his aims.

"Thus every day she rises in the scale,
And every day he in like ratio falls.
Of course we must except the few elect,
Bell-wethers of the flocks who lead the ewes
Into the upland pasturage of Life,
And would persuade their fellow males to browse
In higher, saner, if less opulent fields —
A somewhat barren toil since few give heed.

"Yes, every day the cultured draw recruits
From out the toiling ranks of female life:
For do not wistful daughters daily see
Their back-bent mothers prematurely old,
Raw-boned, cracked-skin, abominable hags,
Worn out with parturition and a toil
As ceaseless as the seasons? They, too, see
What freedom from such drudgery grants elsewhere.
Open the girlish eye and give fair way
To instinct, with the added stimulus
Of good exemplars, such as we to-day
Are moving mind and thew and purse to give,
And let the male keep on his present course —
Why, sir! if this persist, as well it may,
Will girls in their un-Adamed paradise,
Permissioned to eat freely from the Tree,
Come out of it to consort with a man
Whom knowledge-fruit has shown to be an oaf?
Great Heavens! the race will soon become extinct!

I laughed rejoinder to this fierce tirade,
To this perfervidness of utterance
(Though usually the unsuspected truth
Lies patent underneath the froth of speech).
"Nay, nay," said I, "there is no fear of that,

Nor all the other ills that you forebode,
Since lean of sex to sex will ever be
As it has always been since Eden's bloom.
Assuredly our Teuton ancestors,
Who lived imbruted in their bogs and fens
And dusky bosks, though mettlesome in war —
Which they oft bellowsed up to see its sparks,
And hear its fearful, pleasurable roar,
And scent its flesh-spiced fumes—but who in peace
Caroused and brawled and gamed and roundly cursed,
Were well-beloved by their own women-folk
Of chastity unchallenged, who were held
In honor high by these beer-bibbing braves.
Then think of all those doughty chiefs who fought
Upon Scamander's plain—the King of Men —
The Swift of Foot—and he who tossed his Crest —
The Wife-purloiner and the rest—all loved
Of white-armed ones—aye, giving ten years' life
For one white-armed supreme—and yet half brutes!
Why, when I see Achilles in the trench,
His head engarlanded with awful fire,
And at his side the goddess azure-eyed,
Both shrieking like wide-mouthed demoniacs —
I say 'what beasts.' Or when again I think
Of this divine Achilles giving way
To poor old Priam's tears and prayers to yield
The desecrated body of his son
Fouled by its triple charioteering round
The god-built walls of Troy—yes, giving way,
But pocketing the ransom—then say I,
Such chivalry is not for like of me.
And yet Briseis loved him, beast or no.

And Clifford answered, "Very well for then;
What women crave the most in men is force
(At least a splendid woman said so once,
Who looked like that inspired, laureled Muse
Found at Cortona not so long ago):
But force is of another strain to-day.
A dozen men of mental calibre
With pipe-stem legs and arms, and sloping torse
Would sweep Scamander meadows hero-free.
Besides, the beauty of those demigods
Would count for much—if they resembled aught
What marble or the painted clay aver,
Whose fairness even takes the modern girl.
(And be it said much of this plastic charm
Lies in refinement and a rhythmic grace
Half feminine.) But travesty your god
In tweeds of modern cut! Why, man! the fact
We use such toggery proves the point I make
That charm no more is vested in the thews.
Confront Achilles' armor with our gear —
The 'five-fold' shield all bravely story-wrought,
The corselet brighter than the sheen of flames,
The golden crested helm that shone like stars —
Confront this armory with silly braid,
And pompous epaulettes, and gaudy stripes,
(That must be canceled on the battle-line)!
Or take again the splendors of the joust —
The quaintly broidered blazonry of knights,
The plumes, the gleaming steel; and all around
The lists the jeweled vesture of the dames.
Now place beside this picturesqueness—what?
The grotesque armor of the football field;
The costumes of the 'diamond' or the 'crease'!
But this is by the mark, and after all

I really never could enucleate
From out its tough, and baffling, masking rind
The kernel of a woman's preference.
I merely make a note of what I see
And offer it as evidence; because
All testimony has a certain weight
Until rebutted by compelling facts.
Now this is what I noted not long since
Which happened, in a little neighboring town
Where I was sojourning awhile to change
The scene, and sap the hours by turning o'er
The town-hall records to affirm some dates.

"The parents were of honest, average sort,
Such as we often see behind the plough,
Or bustling in and out the kitchen door
Shirt-sleeved, or aproned, following the sex —
Fair types of worthy, plain New-England folk,
Or almost any tillers of the glebe;
Since occupation has a tendency
To label all its votaries alike.
The daughter had distinction of her own,
Nor yet defaced by that hard, manual toil
Which turns to hagdom sweet, engaging girls —
Which grants to flowering beauty but the boon
Of a few favoring, full-blown, brilliant months,
Wasting like roses from a sumptuous red
To lurid purples ere their petals fall;
Or supernatural clouds that paint the west
With undreamed hues, then sudden pass to ash.
And it would seem she had a bodement fixed
Of this sad evanescence of her charm,
Her power, her all in all—a talent's match.
If her fair skin beneath the massy hair —

That snared the bluish sky-tones in the lights,
But burned in shade like oaken autumn leaves —
Should brown and corrugate with over-work,
If her neat form should knot and gnarl likes pines
That battle with the winds on saltish dunes,
What then could Fortune bring her but the End?
For, mark you, she was not the duplicate
Of her progenitors, for whom sufficed
The stubborn rearing of heroic schools
That made them what they were, or dull, or wise —
But yet the Nation's bulwark at the pinch.
The schools have changed, and now their larger scheme
Suggests expatiation into fields
Of wider boundaries. Old tastes have passed;
And she was permeated with the new.

"I saw her frequently about the Inn
Where she performed some office clerical;
And as occasion prompted I was wont
To talk with her: and she forsooth was pleased
To barter words with one who knew a life
Revealed to her through print and dream alone.
Thereon I quickly gleaned that trite old tale
We know so well in these unrestful days —
The parents' blind desire to see their sons
And daughters rise, in what is called the world,
From their low station to a something vague
And bright as flimsy mists upon the heights,
Whose life is quickly quenched by the same sun
That breeds the glister of their moment's charm.
And yet they spend their all to gain this end,
And mortgage all to float this mere balloon
That once a-wing, God knows where it may fall.

Ah, if a dexterous aeronaut may once
Cast out his kedge, and anchor on safe land,
We shall forever, I suppose, forget
The lost adrift on lone convulsive seas!

"So my fair lady was initiate
In music-mysteries, books, and such an Art
As our proud high-schools give: of all enough
To prod the appetite for lofty things,
But not enough to gain a livelihood
With choice, exacting tools—and just enough
To cause dissatisfaction with a lot
That looms uncouth beneath a glamouring light.
'How can I mate,' she used to say, 'with those
Who go not forth, with men who stagnate here
Like festering, springless pools in airless woods,
Mere butchers' boys, or mongers of green truck,
Or boorish, rancid laborers on a farm,
Or at the very best a druggist's clerk.
Why educate a girl to such a fate,
And teach refinement that she may be coarse,
Infect herself with daily vulgar ways?
For 'tis the law that coarser taints the fine —
And rather than be hindrance to the home,
Not having like to be a blowsy drudge,
I make a more congenial living here,
Where by reflexion I half-see the world.'

"This is a version free of what she said
In my own somewhat high-hued rendering,
A paraphrase of her own simpler words
Spoken naively. Oft she talked with me,
And often at the close of work she sang;
And speech and song were burdened with one fixed,

One sad refrain—the heart's desire to go;
To what she scarcely knew—but yet to go.
And this is what she sang—an artless thing.

What will the fair years bring?
I do not know:
It might be weal and it might be woe,
A garland of rue or a wedding ring
Meet for the bride of an orient king —
Oh, I must go!

Why do I linger here
From bloom to snow?
The same sun shines and the same winds blow
The livelong seasons from year to year,
And the harmonies grade from green to sere —
Oh, I must go!

Sweet Years, be kind to me!
For I would flow
Like eager brooklets that wider grow
As nearer they run to the unknown sea,
Gleaming through glade and flowerful lea —
Oh, I must go!

"And 'go' she did, drawn cityward by glare
And glamour and the fripperies that lure.

"Then what became of her amid the blaze?
Scorched, or enhanced by fulness of the flame?"
I asked with interest. "I am not sure,"
Said he; "but ugly village tales were rife,
Which quick were spread by women supple-tongued —
Officious harpies unto whom a Fall

Is asset in their scandaling routine.
Thus much I heard from one who nursed me through
A tedious malady, and who, it seems,
Lodged in the house with her for some few weeks.
According to this nurse she spent her time
In moping o'er her comely indigence,
And longing for the opulent woman's cates,
The which she could not have in honest wise.
And if by chance there passed an equipage
Of trim appointment such as rich folk have,
Or if she read of jeweled, social queens
Whose silly doings certain noxious sheets
Deem worth their while to air in print; why then
She used to fling herself upon the bed
Weeping from stark chagrin—a frame of mind
To preface any downright foolishness.
When I was up again, I saw her—where?
Upon the stage, a tricked-out chorus-girl!

* * * * * *

I rather think those harpies spoke the truth.

"Too bad," said I, "and what a pity 'tis,
What pity that a Fall should flare no light—
No danger-beacon to foreguard the rest—
So it would seem. The world's as black as pitch!

But Clifford heeding not my platitudes
Continued: "Here's another tale that came
Within my ken, and seems to emphasize
My statement that in every woman's veins
There flows an artist's blood—a drop, mayhap,
Which is discovered in a crudish taste

To decorate her hat, her frock, her hair —
But yet to decorate; or floods of it
Which sweep her to an ecstasy—or doom!

"Beyond that arbored range of blue-green hills,
There lies a township which in olden time —
Before the locomotive racked the vales —
Had some importance; now 'tis parcel-dead.
But here and there along the uncoached road,
Still may be seen some ample, hipped-roofed house,
Elm-shaded, unrepaired, with shabby barn
And offices dependent in the rear;
While unpruned scraggy apples ramble o'er
The weedy close of once a garden trim,
Deciphered now by a few flowering shrubs
Or sparse perennial, wastrels from the past.
The girl I speak of lived in such a place —
Her people not unlike the sheltering roof,
Once hale, now worn, but yet of good estate.
And she was dowered with New England eyes,
And hair that might have crowned a sea-king's mate,
And form as svelt as any oread's,
And tastes refined as your Aspasias',
Colonnas', d'Estes', but without of course
Their climate to develop and expand.
She seemed to have a passion for the fair
In song, or tale, or art, or Nature's realm,
With almost hatred for unseemliness.
She used to sit beneath the Doric porch
All trellised by the ramping woodbine sprays:
And once at dusk I heard her caroling
To no one but herself and her fair dreams.
All Nature with romance was permeate:
Upon a green, transparent sky there rayed

Long golden bars from voids behind the hills;
And higher up upon the grayer fields
Thin zenith-rack took shape of purple plumes,
While from the granges in green, gloaming vales
The bluish smoke-shafts bent to Evening's breeze.
Her song was sweet and melting as the light;
A sort of penitential orison
To Beauty for our desecrating ways.

How fair thou art! how fair!
O Beauty, thou wouldst aye abide,
Nor least of thy sweet graces hide,
And we should see thee everywhere,
So fair, so fair,
Did we to thee true fealty swear.

Oh, thou art fair, so fair!
And yet we cross thee for our gain,
Thy loveliest aspects we profane,
We care not for thee—no—not care,
So fair, so fair,
Turn not away in thy despair!

O Beauty, thou art fair;
I see thee roam the Earth the Sky,
The green below, the blue on high;
All, all, save us, thy love declare,
So fair, so fair,
O Beauty, bear with us, oh, bear!

"Not far from this green trellised, Doric porch
There stood another home of the same mould,
But of a sterner cast, that had for years
Sheltered a sturdy race of preaching men,
True shepherds of their flocks in every wise,

Who gripped the temporal and the spiritual crook
That none might stray abroad—yet wolf-secure.
Our maid had given both her heart and hand
To the last scion of this clergy-stock,
Inheriting their lusty will to preach
The Faith to every cantle of the earth,
But leavened with the tolerance of the times,
And less insistent than his forbears were
To hammer home the truth in stubbornness,
When 'twas too near his cotes. Perhaps he thought
It would be greater glory to the Lord
Could he present him with a score of souls
Virgin of any faith save stocks and stones.
Howbeit, he chose to serve his Maker thus,
And 'vangelize in some outlandish place
Where dusky swarms verge on the apish breed.
He was well-looking—quite enough to please
Fastidious, feminine taste—strong featured, dark,
A shock of almost Indian hair, a nose
Slightly accipitrine, while from the eyes
There welled deep currents of fanatic zeal.
His form showed nerve-ascendency—a poet's
You would aver, or rapt tragedian's.
Like many a man of ardent temperament
He was neglectful of appearances,
And preened himself but little 'fore his glass.
But he was young, and youth condones, nay, oft
Exalts a picturesque neglect, which age
Forsooth can ill afford to manifest.

"The circumstance of home and purse was such
That long deferment of the marriage-bond
Seemed so assured, that they both deemed it best
For him to gather up at once his crop

Of waiting, savage, equatorial souls.
They yet were young, and could with vantage wait
A lustrum's length, or even twice as much.
And so she waved her kerchief as his ship
Ebbed out to sea; and when it was hull-down,
And only placed by a thin fumous streak,
She took her solitary heart a-home
Among the mild, reminding hills and vales.

"As the long months increased, so did augment
Her idealities, until he seemed
Unparagoned in traits of flesh and soul —
A quasi-demigod enchristianized.

"'Tis proverbed that there is a term to all —
That all things come to patience in the end.
So after dreamy years she took the deep,
And watched the misting, lessening landmarks drop
Into the west below the level sea:
Then turned her vision eastward with her heart.
'Tis not my purpose to draw out the tale
As novelists are wont to dreariness
With prolix soul-dissection, or debauch
Of words, or sleight of phrase, or tediousness
Of landscape-painting, or environment,
Oblivious of the docile reader's rights;
But merely give the climax in a line
To validate my prefatory claim
That every girl's an artist in her way.

"It happened through an unforeseen mischance,
That when her goodly vessel sighted land,
Our missionary, a few miles or so
From off the coast, was herding with a tribe
Of semi-brutes, to whom a crockery bead

Was of more worth than bushels of sheer truth ;
And he was wrestling to enhance the price
Of Truth, and to depreciate the bead's.
Such was his zeal combined with ingrained drift,
That outwardly he was akin to those
Whom he would cleanse of spiritual noisomeness.
I cannot give you intimate details
Of their long-dreamed of meeting, nor the words
That passed, unless I arrantly invent.
This only was I told ; that when she cast
Her high expectant gaze upon a thing
She scarce could recognize—unclean, unkempt,
Incrusted with the frowsy scurf of years,
Imbruted by contagion with half-beasts —
She turned her back on it, and shipped herself
Forthwith aboard the hull that brought her there !

" And what became of him ? " I childlike asked.
" I do not know," said he, " not having heard :
The moral stands the stronger as it is
Without the futile ' envoi ' ; come ! for now
I feel the night-chill sagging on the fields
'Tis supper-time, and I'm in appetite.

ON A HILLSIDE

(A dialogue)

" How fair thou art, sweet Sister ! thy great eyes
Vibrate like harebells in the unscythed grass
That yellows 'neath the vanguard August rays ;
And thy dark upmassed hair doth beetle o'er

Thy brow like hemlocked scars o'er frosted fields;
And thy full height keeps measure with thy soul —
Too lofty oft I think: for from its perch
It hath not vision of our lowland ways,
Our cults, our customs, and our social curbs.
Thine ardent gaze is ever upward turned
On some aerial splendor far from us
That ranges skyey deeps, beyond our sphere.
And what seems good to us seems ill to thee;
And those stanch monoliths that pillar up
Our edifice, like Samson, thou wouldst tug
And strain, till wall and roof-tree thundering fall.

"Mere edicules, abodes for pigmy souls.

"What vantageth to move in giant-wise,
An isolated mammoth amid men
Who make their laws for average calibre?
We talk of holy things, and thou dost say
'These ways dogmatical are not for me.
Better my own discriminating sense
Of what is right or wrong!' We talk of love
And consequential hallowed marriage ties,
And thou dost curl thine autocratic lip!

"Too often have I seen their ugly yield,
And heard the sickening wail from fettered hearts.
Listen, my tender One, 'twas told me once
That some great woman of the world refused
To join herself in wedlock to the man
She loved, though he implored it; for she saw
That men were happier with their mistresses
Than with their wives. And so she chose that life.
Nay! start not, when I say that such a love,

One-thoughted, self-sustaining, nor up-propped
By sacrament, alone is worth the name.
Who but distrustful hearts would rather not
Be bounden by the bond of Love than Law?
For should Love's bond fray to a filament
Then snap—so better than a chafing chain
Welded by legal smiths, that only they
Can rive again with mortifying blows.
If slight the obligating strands, then stout
Will be the anxious heart's desire to please;
To keep the splendors of the flesh aglow,
(As it were made of ivory and gold
Like Athens' maiden polished to the pitch);
To keep the mind upburnished till it shine
Like heirloomed silver out some darkened coign
Of ageless, carven oak, nor ever dims
Beneath the lustring hands of pious sons;
To keep the manners gracious, kind and sweet,
More gracious day by day to substitute
Of what the flesh may lose despite all care.
But if one's love must needs be fenced about
With fortalice, and scarp, and all the guards
Of Church and State, what motive would there be
To hold by personal charm a thing secured?
And mayhap one would soon degenerate
Into the slattern we so often meet
Shackled to men who must abominate
Those intimacies that alone are dear
When glamoured by the aureole of Love.

"O Darling, I love not to hear thee rail
Against the sanctity of sanctioned Law.
Tumultuous is thy will, and thy great heart
Cast in a mould of too heroic form.

And all in vain thou flingest thy fierce speech
Against the bulwarks of the customed world,
As furious waves project their ponderous mass
Against habitual cliffs—then pass in smoke.

" Dear timid One, indeed thou shouldst have been
The wimpled inmate of some white-walled home
Upon an olived hill, where naught is heard
Save tuneful orisons from guileless throats;
Or better still thou shouldst have chirped a bird
Prisoned within the bower of some mild maid.
Yet hear, my tender Dove, nor cast a plume
In thy frayed ruffling. Thou dost speak of Law,
As it were sweet coincident of Love
(I think it harsh concomitant of Hate):
Among who are accounted gentlemen
The courts are held to be of mean repute,
And such call 'debts of honor' where the word
Alone stands guarantee of settlement,
And where compulsion of the court is deemed
Unchivalric, unmeet for knightly blood.
The curb of witnessed oath I hold to be
Unworthy warden of surrendered love,
Apt only for distrusting, timorous folk.
For me no pledge at all, or sworn-to words,
Save such as may in superfluity
Of passion's utterance be dropped in ears
Scarce recking—mere redundancy of speech —
As surplusage of yield is dropped from boughs
That bend with overclustered, swelling fruit.
What if the flame of some new splendent love
Should roll its sudden disk above the hills,
Awhile the old floats fainting in the west,
A piteous thing, paling on cruel skies?

What would'st thou do my gentle, loving One?
Roll back the disk behind the orient ridge
With prayers, processions, threats and ogreish laws,
Like superstitious oafs in direst shift?
And even if thou couldst arrest its course
Inflamed with fierce desire unfulfilled,
Would'st thou live on beneath its alien rays,
Holding a heart that had no warmth for thee?

"But Time, my Sister, and the drift of Right
Would fan to freshened life the waning fire.

"That which is pallid ash can ne'er relume.

"Better spent ash than an unhallowed flame.

"Death is a surer medicine than Time.

"The gift of Death resides with God alone.

"So bondsmen to a trite routine maintain.
Yet granted that slow, hoary Time would heal,
And in the end a displumed Love return,
Or, likelier, Pity take the place of love,
What of the lacerated hearts that throe
While days and even years lag drearily?

"The consciousness of Virtue would relieve.

"The knowledge of lost Love-bliss would torment.

"Not Love-bliss born of seed unsanctified,
Sinister weed among the frowning flowers.

"Thou talkest like the weavers of the Tale,
Or makers of the sanctimonious Play,
Wherein to suit conventionalities,

A mawkish virtue triumphs in the end,
Untrue to Life, which teaches naught but sin —
For sin I hold it when a wounded heart
Is hospitaled at length beneath the roof
Of some rejected, puling suitor's love,
Whom authors paint in Virtue's dullest grays.

"I talk as those who know the weight of words
And the far reach of inconsiderate speech.
But tell me, thou, who lovest loveliness,
Has permanence of Home no charm for thee?
No charm for thee the Hearth's divinities?
Do not the joys of Domesticity
Allure thee from thy would-be outcast ways?
Call to thy graphic mind those pictures sweet
Of love maternal that young Raphael traced
When in the lily-scutcheoned town he worked,
While yet the Umbrian aura chastely played
About his tender brush. Have they no charm
For thee, those groups of sempiternal grace —
Sweet mothers fostering their seraphic babes
In faultless harmony of thought and line?
Do not they cradle in thy lofty soul
The cult of humbler, sweeter, holier joys?
Or would it overtop all sanctities?

"Humbler, perhaps, dear girl, but sweeter, nay!
Even the Urbinate refused these joys
Awhile he painted them; since best he loved
His unarrested art by Children's whims;
And Fornarina gave him kiss for kiss,
Emancipate from dull maternity.
Hast ever noticed how the painter-craft
Makes of St. Joseph mere accessory

To culminate the so-called ' pyramid '—
A composition aye in high repute —
Or cancel him as flat encumberment?
And right they were those clever painter-men —
Or those, at least, who gave them formulæ —
For though the good St. Joseph needs must play
A minor rôle—being the babe divine —
They blazed the eternal truth that mother's love
Turns from the procreator to the life
Created—an all else excluding trust.
But when I yield my heart it must persist
Entire, unminished by a cleaving claim,
The heart I take, unsevered as my own.

" Yet love of offspring blows a wasting flame.

" And dims the splendor of the fullest fire.

" This joint affection is itself a bond.

" So often sundered by diverging views.

" Dear children buttress parents in their years.

" More often they desert a crumbling house.

" The love of Home consoles for loss of Heart.

" What consolation when the hearth is cold.

" Four walls at least protect and keep alive.
And where thy walls in age, what time thy mate
Unbound by law shall leave thee woe-begone?

" Woe's cause, at least, would not be caged therein
Persistent reminiscence of the past:

Nor should I hear the intolerable voice
Once effluent from Love, now rasped with gall.
And thinkest thou, as many others do,
That man alone is subject to heart change?
Nothing in Nature dureth—nay, not Love:
It undergoes some change, and wisely so,
Else we should be consumed by force of flame.
The hurtling rapids meet the even lake;
The seething waters cool in some flat pool;
And bride-love chills beneath the stagnant roof
Of home, and humdrum domesticity.
If I may judge from daily evidence—
Even of friends—it would be venturesome
To guarantee my own heart's permanence,
Much less to shackle it with legal links.
It might be my sad fate to feel the rage
Of fresh, 'unlicensed' love, as codists say.
Could I live happy 'neath the fiery beams
That erst did generate responsive Love,
But now engender but responding Hate?
And as for thy protecting walls and roof
We have the wherewithal to shelter self
In these just days when every bar is down
To woman's energies. We can as men.

"Should accident or illness supervene?

"There's ever risk: but rivers flow as aye,
And drugs are cheap—sure shelter for the stressed.

"I shudder at thine irreligious words.
That which thou dost not mould thou shouldst not break.
A curse it is to antedate the end!

And list! O swift of Heart, if there be naught
Of joy to thee in artless infant ways —
In dimpled smiles, or sweet activities
Of rosed, cherubic limbs, nor in the cares
So dear to motherhood, is there no charm
For thee in thy belovèd native land?
Now cast thine eyes abroad from our high perch
On this fair July morn, when warm winds blow,
And all the ruddy barn-vanes point due west;
When racing clouds pavilion cobalt skies;
When all the trees and fragrant grasses rock
With full delirium of the amplest life,
And the hot air feels cool upon the cheek.
The Sun is now o'erhead; but when he sinks
O'erlabored out of sight, the western skies —
Like tiger-lilies basking in the shine —
Black-spotted with the dozing clouds, will blaze
Their orange banners o'er subjacent hills,
And every glooming vale will whisper 'Peace.'
There may be fairer lands, but none will speak
To thee with such a homely eloquence —
So fresh, so verdant, pastoral and pure.
Yet all their joyance would be barred to thee
Shouldst thou persist in thy contumacy.

"But landscape brings no anodyne to hearts
Abraded by contention, and at best
Is mere accessory to weal or woe —
A foil to happiness or misery.

"Not so! A tempered man once said to me —
One who had passed his half-a-hundred years,
Had tasted both the sweet and rue of Love,
Had felt the throb of halest Life, and borne

In patience hours of hidden Agony —
That with accumulation of the years,
The pure delight in Nature gathered ground,
And of itself was a sufficiency.

"But other lands there are where one may prove
These landscape joys of thine—historic lands
Of monumental mould, where castles gleam;
Where oleanders ring upon the blue;
Where solemn cypresses moan ancient myths;
Where languid foam-drifts silver classic shores;
And others where the palm consorts with seas
More 'tense than malachite or lazuli.

"No land is lovely as a permanence
Where one doth never see the friendly smoke
From kinsmen's hearth waft white against noon's
shade,
Or sag upon the meads at evening's cool.
But, Sister, speak! so barbèd are thy words
That they do frighten me! They seem to spring
From some unuttered impulse—not begot
Of love of argument, or fence of word.
It cannot be that thou hast veiled the truth
With masquerading jeer and poignant wit?
That thou hast jeoparded thy noble heart
To some unholy claim? What! no response?
And thou dost turn to go? Art gone? O Christ
Have mercy on her! What she wills she *will*."

HUBERT AND LOIS

I

"The afternoon is wondrous sweet," she said,
"So mild and stirless is the October air:
Come, drive with me. I know your whims of yore,
My dear, platonic friend, and you shall hold
Free commerce with your reveries, awhile
I, too, make silent discourse with myself:
To chatter irks when Nature spreads her wares."
And by my faith she ranged them royally!
The hills were mantled with delicious browns
And russets, brinded oft with yellow pale,
(The birches' cope, reluctant to disrobe
And bare their pearly limbs to winter's gaze),
The brown and gold concording with a sky
Of thin and limpid blue straked with white swirls,
Making it seem immeasurably far.
Then dappled, russet hills, and cloud-racked blue
Evoked the past; and since my year's-mate friend
Kept compact with her promise not to talk,
I wrote in fancy, on its actual site,
The heart's experience of a goodly man,
With whom I used to ramble in warm moons,
When city-sated we renewed the gust
Of soul and body by our touch with earth,
And inhalation deep of heaven-born air.

His name was synonym for what he was,
Hubert, "the bright of soul." A poet he

By birth, but not self-advertised as such,
Though his performance gave the unchallenged right.
For few dare claim the lustrous-berried bays
In life, and seek to crown themselves therewith —
As did that Emperor who in his pride
Wrested the jeweled emblem from the hands
Of an astounded pope—but leave the act
To Death who sole hath warrant to gird the brow
Imparadised with sempiternal leaves.
Not his the care to blazon forth the fact
On some commercial page in neat-wrought rhyme
Intoning vaporous thoughts unsanative:
Rather to live the poet's life, and watch
The human heart's vicissitudes between
Its goal's extreme of bliss and agony;
To till the glebe of Beauty; to uplift
The soul in contemplation ecstasied;
To apprehend and blaze the eternal truth —
The poet's privilege—to gird against
The panoplied oppressions of the great;
To curb the encroachments of the vulgar rich;
To check the license of the untaught poor;
To fan his indignations to a flame —
Such was his choice. And as for audience —
Mayhap there might be none. Could he but catch
The public ear, 'twere well; if not, 'twere well
To liberate a wingèd thought which might
In unforeshadowed time or place cast seed,
And bear some fruit benign amid the tares.
And he could lead this poet-life, because
He had inherited the wherewithal
To gratify his moderate appetites,
By sacrificing certain worldly gauds —
Pretty enough, but lacking gravity.

Moreover these mild abnegations touched
Only himself—nor having wife nor child.
But most of all his competence was prized,
Because he could stand up with level eye
'Gainst any man, nor be constrained for bread,
Or craved advancement, or increase of gain,
To fawn upon an opulent smile, or brook
An insolent brow, or autocratic tongue.
So much for Hubert; save I superadd
His looks were well enough, and that he neared
The age when it is credited by some
That mind and body spread their widest bloom.

'Twas in this very place and at a time
When black-boled pollards languidly do shoot
Their full-fledged arrows into sultry skies
Of violet hue, and untorrential streams
Rehearse their inverted flight, that Hubert met
The maid who helmed his hot, adventurous heart
Into unmanageable seas. Her name
Was Lois. She was young enough to court
Meridian light, and undismayed to brush
Her cheek against the May-month's apple-bloom:
Withal mature enough to reverence
The aspirations of ideal souls.

Not mine to picture here a paragon,
A flawless maidenhood one rarely finds
On Nature's canvas; but to document
Frank forms and tones, with truthful lights and darks,
As candid Life portrays—a virtue here
Emphatic on a calm, resplendent brow;
A love of lurement in the perfumed hair;
An ideality in heavenly eyes;

A merriment in dimple-dipping lips ;
A certain worldliness in grace of limb
(For youth is youth and oft will up and show
That at the core it is half bacchanal) ;
And as for cast of voice, hers seemed to match
Those sotto-voce notes a tenor wafts
Across the lights to myriad ravished ears.

From out white dunes of snow
The fierce North wind may blow
Above the brown, unsodded earth,
Nor quicken life awaiting birth ;
Nay, not a spear will show,
Until warm Auster come a-wooing,
Fruitful Land with whisperings suing :
Then tepid showers
Dark beds imbrue,
And forth spring flowers
Of gorgeous hue.

We say the fields are green,
And blue yon sky serene ;
But should a flaring poppy spread
Amid the grass its flaming red,
What splendors supervene !
Or should the sky be brushed with gold,
'Twould seem more blue a hundred fold :
For colors plain
Must find their mate
Would they attain
To sovran state.

A heart from day to day
Some uninspired lay

Will thrum athwart an unstrung lyre,
Nor lift to flame its latent fire,
But pass to cinder gray:
Unless its counterpart come winging
Across its course, sweet lyrics singing:
Ah, then what bliss!
Oh, limbs that twine!
Oh, kiss on kiss!
O joy divine!

Aye, aye, all life has its affinity,
The happy ambient that animates.
Maugre the blemish, kindred feelings trance.
How oft we may have wished to ease the note
Of ponderous Angelo; or harshened here
The song of Raphael; or e'en emend
A poet's mighty line; yet in despite —
Perhaps because of petty grievances —
We worship at their shrine. So Hubert's heart
Was captivate by its own complement;
And Love was mutual—blemishes or no.
Ten thousand temptings may annul themselves
In foam when wreaked against a solid will,
And yet *one* deft-adjusted wile may dash
Its cliff-like stanchness into veriest dust.
Albeit he oft had played the pretty sport
Of archery, with hearts for target, yet
Had he most prudently unbarbed the shafts
Before the game, knowing that Hymen's thrall
Was not for him. This time the fangèd bolt
Winged home and home in flight reciprocal.

O reader, has thou ever whiled away
The courteous summer hours with thy beloved?
Hast thou at sparkling prime seen dew-drops gleam,

And eyes to glimmer as the gleaming dew?
Hast thou at higher noon in gardens leafed
Beheld the pomponed larkspur—light and dark—
Swaying its tufts of blue to mild west winds,
Like plumes of tourneying knights in listed fields
And heard the rumorous bee, all honey smeared
Reëcho thine own dulcet murmurings?
Or 'neath the bevel rays of afternoon
Upon some marish-lane luxuriant,
Selvedged with luscious purple, green, and gold,
Hast ever freed thine ardent utterance?
Or when at eve great drops of molten brass—
Poured from the sun's last segment—overbrim
The dark blue hills that edge the western sky,
Hast thou outpoured thy molten, flaming heart?
Or when at night the tender citron moon
Doth seem to swim on a black arctic sea
Immensely deep and still—O reader, what?
Wert thou alone with thy blest all-in-all.

So passed with them the summer-solsticed days
On uplands where huge candid, errant clouds
Defined the sequent ridges with blue shades;
On lowlands where the bright, metallic sun
Chased lovers to the cool of earless groves,
Now giving verse for verse from favorite bards,
Now bartering thoughts on high and august themes,
And then again like fluting birds at noon
Singing some pretty nonsense to the air.

Duet

O Love, we play
The while, the while
You sweetly smile;

And yet they say
There comes a day
When hearts do tire
Of heart's desire,
Nor even you can reconcile.

He

But yet 'tis said
That oft, that oft
The Gods aloft,
Ambrosia-bred,
In pets are led
To high disdain,
Yet Love again
Doth harmonize with coaxing soft.

She

Oh, yes, we know
If true, if true
That Love like dew,
Where flowers blow
And planets glow,
Will always stray
Throughout the day,
But homes at eve to bliss renew.

Duet

O Love we play
Awhile, awhile
You soothly smile.
Oh, stay, oh, stay
And join our lay!

We may not heed
Where Time may lead,
Sweet Love, if you the hours beguile.

As some sheer scar of ice, or deep crevasse,
Doth bar the climber's path to shining peaks,
So frowned the obstacles that barred the way
To Eros' culmination—Hymen's crest—
Not insurmountable to time, and wit,
And fertile patience, albeit for the nonce
A disconcertment to their natural hope.
Domestic opposition on her side,
On his the lack of means for dual life:
Two valid hindrances—accepted each.
For who may sing his true, impartial song
To an awaiting world, if he be swayed
By hard Necessity's compelling ways?
Or who may list enwrapt to such a song
If she be all-concerned with make-shift schemes,
Or tortured by the sordidness of Want?
Yet Summer smiled; and they meanwhile rejoined
Smile to a smile, not uncontent to taste
What joys the luscious present sanctified.
But when the golden leaf-fall 'gan to change
The color of soft mossy forest-floors,
And capering leaves swirled down the wind-swept
roads,
And one no more did hear the lay of life;
When Summer's death announced the long sojourn
Within the city's nigh to skyless lanes,
Where frenzied obligations (deemed as such)
Would mortify all liberal intercourse
Between the two—he, knowing worldly ways,
And the aye-readiness of human ears

To harbor unsubstantiated talk
That hath so often wrecked a sundered heart,
Did take her loyal hand within his own,
Saying "for Love's sweet sake make oath to me,
That should some tonguester bear a tale malign
To thee, or lisp an innuendo dark,
Thou wilt not heed, till from my very lips
Thou hast corroboration. Swear me this."
And she made solemn answer; "yea, I will."

II

An armlet of the mighty Eastern sea —
Which coys or quarrels with its guardian shores,
As the wind lists or no—bends gracefully
Into the verdant land. Its margent waves
Lap languidly small ruddy capes that lift
The ocean's summer blue. Between these capes
Sweep gleaming beaches of the fairest sand
Forever drinking up the creamy foam —
White flotsam of the slow redounding surge.
Behind the soughing border of the sea
Rise the stern pines, and kind deciduous trees
That all but mask the pretty summer homes
Whereon the ingenious architect hath spent
Both taste and happy plan—a peopled spot,
But scarce apparent to the casual eye,
So artful hath been wrought the virid screen.
Here townsfolk congregate in sultry times:
And here it was I met a man who pleased,
Yet did not please—and rather more *not* please.
Behind a few engaging traits there lurked
To a refined, discriminating eye
A score of qualities that ruffed the nerves.
Having his larder (in commercial sense),

Well lined with bonds and crisp certificates —
To mention naught of realty and cash —
He gratified a curiosity
To see the world. So roaming up and down
With sedulous care to note the routined things
(But without *flair* to use a foreign term)
He gleaned a specious knowledge, that with some
Passed for a connoisseurship, and which gave,
In justice be it said, a certain air
Of culture. And perchance to gratify
A vanity, he patronized the haunts
Where artists gathered, learnt their dialect,
And aired it pompously to wondering folk.
The artists—needy fellows for the most —
Were not reluctant to exploit his purse
(To keep hard importunities at bay),
Or dust a cobwebbed bottle now and then,
Or taste some lordly-condimented dish,
Or sample rare, exotic luxuries.
In counterchange he claimed a deference
That did inflate his personality,
Until the non-practitioners took him for
A real Mecænas. All his moods and mien
Were vulgar, too. More clamorous was his garb
Than that of gentle caste—not over loud,
But loud enough to speak supremacy
Of purse. And when in company that lunched
Or dined in modesty, he could be picked
By an environment more numerous
Of appetizers, liquors, pungencies,
Which emphasized his tawdry patronage.
Black, shaggy brows he had that beetled o'er
A gluttonous, bulging eye, and puffy jowl,
And sensual lips. Athletic was his frame,

Of sporting—squire-like type. His passion was
To kill some mild-eyed, antlered animal,
Or wing an iridescent water-fowl,
Or land some swooning, long-tormented fish,
Then brag of it. And this was joy more keen
To him, I trow, than all Mecænasdom.
Yet mark, O gracious reader, what I note
Was not too obvious. He might pass—and did —
Before unburrowing eyes for what he played.
But did he pass as such in Lois' eyes —
Eyes that had lingered on the world's elect,
That had envisaged Nature's loveliness
Companioned by a poet's guiding gaze?
And yet she was the consecrated mate
Of this pretentious patron of the Arts!

Fly south sweet bird upon thine easy wing:
Dost thou not hear the shivering oreads sing
Their song of woe?

The ghostly frosts already spread their veil
'Neath the cold eyes of stars adown the dale.
'Tis time to go.

No more the Sun dawns early o'er the hills;
No more he hearkens to ecstatic trills
That joyous flow

From every throbbing throat in wood, or wold,
Or marshy pool, to greet his matin gold.
O sweet One, go!

Why shouldst thou linger on to blench and quail?
What can thy tuneful tenderness avail,
Beneath grim snow?

Or what against the blast thy preenèd plumes,
That oar the zephyrs when the Spring-tide blooms,
And violets grow?

Fly south, my comely bird, oh, take thy flight
To lands where fragrance hangs upon the night,
Where soft stars glow.

Mild Auster waits thee, redolent and warm;
Fly south, O sweet One, ere the arctic storm
Upon thee blow.

Fly south, dear girl-like bird, fly south! Thou art
Too young the anguish of a wintry heart
To undergo.
Fly south where calm seas flow!

O fatal sunshine, fatal calm and flowers!
Did they outvalue all the tenderness,
The mutual mantling 'gainst the glacial blast
Of Poverty? outvalue laurel crowns,
The leafier for a wife's inweaving hands?
Would not the approving glance of sapient eyes,
Or the half-envious tongues of average folk
Whispering in awe "She is the wedded Muse
Who prompts his pregnant verse," have brought thee more,
Poor Lois, than far Ophir's golden yield?
What caitiff wind did sweep thee to this strait,
Rock-tenanted, and white with death-damp foam?
E'en now I see thy pallid countenance,
And thy disheartened eye, in olden days
Intrepid as an eaglet's; and thy lips
A-tremble with unuttered wretchedness;
Thy stricken, downcast mien; thy halting step,
Erewhile so buoyant with the thrill of Hope!

An elder sister, strong of will there was,
Whom an uncalculating, thriftless love
(Now disavowed by Law) had brought to see
The rasping, not the euphonious incidents
Of wedlock. She had mated with a man
Galliard and gay of plume as any cock
That fore his harem flaunts his finery
With self-sufficing strut: and his ideas
Of constancy were almost parallel.
As writ before, divorce had rescued her
At length from this light-conscienced libertine,
But left her indigent, and bittered 'gainst
A sugared bond, love-forged. She knew that age
Did cumulate desires for luxury,
To which alone stanch wealth doth minister.
She looked through clear Experience's lens,
Yet failed with unimaginative eye
To penetrate the veil that mists the view
Of empires unexplored, nor could forecast
The utter hatefulness of bastard love —
If Love may so be called. With every wile
She armed herself to thwart sweet Lois' choice;
Deft-painting with an opulent brush the gauds
Of pleasure—equipages trim; a home
Decked with the spoils of ransacked Italy;
Or Chinese loot; or Indian curios
That reeked of blood; or precious canvases
Worth diamond-weight; quick, deferential hands
To abrogate self-service; and the means
To see and hear the choicest, or to lend
Some happy help to clamoring Distress —
In sum, the myriad dear amenities
That ease the strain of years. And in her zeal
She probed the mysteries of Hubert's life —

Those accidents of sheer environment
That fall to most; not heinous in themselves —
Untoward rather—things one would forget.
For though uncircumspect he oft had been,
He never yet had guiltily transgressed
With maid or matron. Oh, may Satan sear
The accurst, malignant memory of those
Who foster with persistence year on year
A neighbor's fault, who on the warp thereof
Weave specious figments simulating truth
To unenquiring eyes! Aye, one there was
Who cherished in her hell-hag's heart a tale —
Embroidered with her gossip aptitude —
To Hubert's hurt. The sister heard content;
And passed it on to Lois, now nigh spent
By argument opposed to cottage-love.
Did she forget the solemn promise given,
When Autumn's leaf-rain tinctured all the land
To credit no derogatory tale
Till she had affirmation of the same
From Hubert's lips? Or was she overwrought
By blinding jealousy? Or yet too weak
To stand against a domineering will?
Ah, who may know; mayhap the triple force
Conjointly broke her to submissiveness.
Howe'er may be, when her vitality
Was on the ebb, there came into her life
Our sciolist—wealthy, and plausible,
And captivate at once by her arch-charm —
A prideless sciolist, unchivalric,
Not unabashed to take of Love's caress
A smaller measure than he gave, nor saw
The effort in the meagre, cold return.
The sister was of course all ecstasied,

Playing presiding genius at these rites
Which would have chilled and foiled a brute's intent.
Then ere a long probationary time
Could make its revelations, Hymen came
To sanctify the thing. The twain were one.

O Hymen, hail! Thou comest flower-crowned,
With gleaming-kirtled maidens in thy train,
Attended each by her fair, fresh-limbed swain,
While rose-cheeked cherubs blossom-strow the ground

Before the bridal pair. Now ritual joins
Two separate, yearning hearts, and they are one,
Until their goodly glass of life be run.
Peal! trembling tubes, let all the arching groins

That lift the roof their high approval give
To what the dusking hours will consummate —
The lawful joyances of Love's estate —
The sanctioned nuptial bliss unfugitive!

O Hymen, hail! Thou comest sombre-browed,
And in thy girl-like arms thou bearest chains
Invisible, and thorns, and mortal pains:
Yet no one marks; for still the pipes peal loud,

And still each gleaming-mantled maiden smiles
Upon her fair, attending, young-limbed swain,
And still the lovelets sweetest blossoms rain,
And all the ceremonial pomp beguiles.

O Hymen, hail! What reveler may heed
The agonies, the chains, the gathering frown
Upon thy brow beneath the orange-crown?
Peal all ye pipes! and let thy feste proceed
Great Hymen! Hail!

'Twas when the organ-waves no longer surged
Through transept, nave, and vault, when flowers were sere,
And cherub cheeks were thinned, when coursing months
Had full-disclosed the half-suspected truth —
'Twas then I saw her in her misery —
A misery but parcel-veiled by art.
As Hubert's friend, her wifely attitude
I scrutinized. It was impeccable.
Oft have I noted in my saunterings
Beneath the early summer's genial sky,
How June, the prodigal, the beautiful,
Doth garnish in her perfect color-taste
With golden butter-cup and comely herb
Some uncouth derelict of human toil,
Or gash unsightly on sweet Nature's face.
So will a tactful woman try to mask
With her self-sacrificing loveliness
An undiscerning husband's boorish ways.
And thus did Lois ; but the exacting rôle
Did break her. Even as I daily watched
Through that brief season by the fresh-fanned shore
I saw her spirit falling as a tide
That ebbs its way to far horizon lines,
Leaving upon the corrugated sands
Its signature of ceaseless travailing.

III

In those decreasing, low-orbed autumn days,
When Hubert took from her his blithe farewell
(Blithe for the future largesses of Love),
He deemed it not without the churlish pale
Of chance, that he and Lois might not meet

For some long, tedious while. Nor chafed he much,
Nor feared untoward fate, because he held
Her solemn word to give no audience
To compromising tale, except his tongue
Gave evidence thereto. Nor did he know —
Although experienced of the unequal world —
The absolute prepotency of wealth
Over the slim resources of the poor.
He hoped, as versed before, to gain his goal
With time, with patience, and his wit. So when
Was brought to him the downright cruel fact
That Lois was apostate to her word,
Her principles, her idealities,
He stood dumbfounded. Oh, what need is there
To picture in detail the laborings
Of heart-wreck—the forlorn dismemberment
Of a stanch soul, pounding on fatal sands?
In sooth, no need. Who hath not often seen,
Or heard, or read, or (may God help him!) felt
The costly, hard control throughout the day —
By night the unleashed fever? in the light
The pride-curb; in the dark the shameless tear?
And Hubert passed through all vicissitude
Of heartache like the rest; bracing himself
Before the obdurate world. Yet did he dread
The inevitable, awful coming hour
When he should learn—perhaps from careless lips —
The consummation of the unhallowed rites,
Lest he might fail of poise. And every morn
He turned with tremulous hand the daily sheet,
Scanning the print with eye all terrified
To see if yet it were. And when it *was*,
The moment's wrath prevailed o'er every sense:
With gall and wormwood in his soul he cried,

"Women! oh, damn them all—aye, let us buy
Our concubines adept to satisfy
The momentary passion's need, then sell
Them to a waiting neighbor's urgency!
No commerce permanent! For in their snares
They would entangle us, as did that birth
Of hell, red Clytemnestra, tangle fast
Great Agamemnon in her gory mesh.
And so 'twill ever be till day of doom.
Yea, let them herd together if they will,
And in their isolation free, pursue
Mannish professions; let them uncurbed lead
The so-called 'higher life'—do anything—
Do all—unchecked within the wide world's reach;
But only let them leave us men alone—
Aye, damn them all!"

So cursed he in his pain.
But when the wrath-cloud black had broke to blue,
And normal light once more illumed his ken,
He flushed at his unchivalric tirade:
Since no one more than this heart-foundered man
Did ever rest in woman tenderer faith;
And none more craved her soothing sympathy;
And none did ever cede her higher rank
In aptitudes for what is good and fair.
For was there not inwoven with the male
Fine female strands in his life's tapestry—
Those threads of quiet hue that bind the strong
Into a congruent whole? those golden threads
That gather lustre in the leaden shades?
Is not all knighthood half of woman strain?
So had he always held. And as the moons,
Tranquil and white, did in their progress kind

Drowse into calm the turmoil of his heart,
He turned again to Woman—not in Love
(Unwilling now to test Love's surest cure,
The like with like), but in Philosophy.

Time brings relief,
Yet not enough to smooth away
The furrows of our grief.

Though crescent green
May cloak the ploughshare's channels gray,
When June of earth is Queen,

The steel's deep scar
Will o'er the green itself display
In lines that stretch afar.

When after storm
Calm gently cometh, one would say
That Nature multiform

Beams as before —
So beautiful and sweet and gay —
Aye gay, and even more.

Yet here there shows
A gash where fumed a torrent's spray,
Whiter than mountain snows;

And there the eye
Detects a garden's disarray,
That once aglow did lie

Like jewels fair
Upon a Hebrew's flashing tray,
Or clouds on sunset air.

IV

The radiance of a summer's falling day
Gleamed opulently on the fleecy fringe
Of a benignant, soft-withdrawing shower:
The air was burdened with the odors sweet
Leached by warm rain from Nature's greenery:
Even the languid breezes paused to quaff
The nectarous emanations from the earth.
Silent we stood within a hallowed close—
Hubert and I—high-walled by hemlock hedge.
On either side the sunlight-dappled paths
Great darkling pines—funereal sentinels
To ward perfervid beams or icy gales—
Reared solemnly above inscribèd stones
Shaped into forms revivalists had brought
From Greece or Rome, urn-crowned and garlanded,
And patterned with anthemion or fret.
The marble's glow was dulled by artist Time,
Who streaked the white with black, and toned with moss
The harboring nooks and sheltered chiselings,
Until the graven candor of the stone
Made happy concert with the swarthy pines.
Nor was this mounded acre of the dead
Grim and repellent—or by tawdry taste,
Or overpeopling of the growing dust,
As oft are those dense charnel-houses huge
That touch a city's bound. For high above
The hemlock-hedge ranged pleasant, grassy hills
With graceful villas capped, and tufts of trees,
While near at hand there shone the village spire
Topping a sallowy stream that took its ease
For nigh a meadowed league twixt mill and mill.

Within the hedge sweet open places basked,
Unshadowed by the pine, with sunlight garbed,
Glossing neat grass that isled the head-stones white,
As greenish seas infold a sparkling berg.
And oft the harmonizing, sheeny stem
Of some frail birch caught up the marble's gleam
And bore it to the clouds. Who would not say
It was a beauteous, blessed spot wherein
A travailed heart might love to lie at rest!

Near to a stone we stood that afternoon,
Whose sharp-cut lettering deliberate Time
Not yet to easy legibility
Had lined with moss. *Her* name was writ thereon.
Upon the mound a mourner had imposed
Dark violets, sweet symbols of a grief.
"Not he the murderer?" cried I in wrath,
"Not he whose poignant boorishness did stab
Her shrinking heart? Not he who let her blood
Doth mourn it?" And I glanced to Hubert's face,
Thinking to find consenting anger there.
Yet not a muscle twitched, nor was the eye
Tear-dewed, nor did the lip depress itself
To bitterness, nor did he modulate
A voice as even-throated as a ghost's;
But in a lulled and kindly monotone
He said, "His surely was the right—not mine.
What rights have they who truly love through years
Against the moment's sanction of a priest?
A signature upon a formal sheet
(Whether gold-plumèd Love subscribe or no),
Outponders all the throb of Christendom.
A sounding phrase, a ring, a facile oath —
The unholy thing is done. Love has no rights

Unsupplemented by a ritual
To hallow them before a buckram world.
A candid heart balked of its dear desire,
By mere caprice, or chance, or stronger will,
Must gloze an instant's villainy with lies
To gratify humanity's ideals.
And so methinks the evil will endure
Until man ceases to dissimulate
And learns to act the truth like lesser life —
Life unsophisticate. It may be then
That minds emancipated will devise
Some substitute for this our faultful scheme.
Good friend, till then 'tis ours to acquiesce,
And bear like paladins the things ordained."

"Hubert, I know not whether it be meet
To bear with knightliness a sanctioned wrong:
Rather a cursèd wrong it seemed that day
When on the Eastern coast, whose ruddy capes
Protrude into the implacable great sea,
I saw her fading in her misery.
Her splendid eyes deep-sunk in gloomy caves
Still sparkled through the dark, encircling flesh
Like double beacons on a night-rimmed shoal:
Her whilom unschooled smile, that gleamed as moons
Illumed by some great sun of Happiness,
Was like the coaxèd, artificial smirk
Of unspontaneous women of the world:
Her bearing that of a poor pendant flower
O'erburdened with the load of heaven's tears."

"Yes, a frail, pendant flower," Hubert joined,
"I loved her well. We love because we love —
Unreasonably. We do not diagnose

A heart in science-wise, nor carry scales
On errands of our unadvised desires
To weigh its character. If by good chance
Love's object be heroic, that were good.
No heroine Lois, who was much as are
All women. Not a Berenicé she
Whose temple-dedicated locks did give
A name to stars: no Artemisia she
To stand Devotion's type adown the years;
Nor one of many an unsung recusant
Holding life cheap; but lovable and sweet,
And beautiful as flushing clouds at dawn —
Such as I hope to see her once again,
When I, too, roam amid the asphodel
To greet the angel-shades of those that were."

Happy the flowers
That live but one sweet day,
That through the golden hours
In purfled garments gay
Laugh to the laugh of skies, then pass away.

Not theirs the pain
To feel the cruelty
Of sleet or sheeted rain;
Not theirs the grief to see
Their broidered beauty bruised upon the lea,

Or wake at morn
And in the blanching light
Behold a flower new born
More beautiful and bright,
As radiant as the day—softer than night.

Theirs is the bliss
To know not Love's decline,
To hold the day's long kiss
Through pallors vespertine,
And then to Death their satiate souls resign.

Since that fair summer's golden afternoon
I have not seen him, but I read his verse,
Which seemeth to exhale the violet scent
That hung above her grave, and hath the tone
Of those dark, solemn, sentineling pines —
All sweet and sad, yet not without its balm
To those pale hearts whose mission 'tis to bear.

* * * * * *

The carriage briskly wended up the hill
Into a wide white moon that crowned the slope,
Then swerved into an avenue of spruce
Up to the porch. My year's-mate friend was first
To break the silence, "Have I kept my word?"
She asked. And then half jestingly did add,
"Surely your nurselings soon will cry aloud!"
And so this tale was prompted. That same night
Was roughly sketched the outline of my muse,
Which later on I fashioned into song.

VICTIMS

1861–65

Sad partings were there in those tempest-days
When clarions summoned all the Nation's thews,
When ardent warriors kissed their maids forlorn,

When downcast mothers wept their sad adieus
To chafing, flushing sons—their love of loves.
And there were greetings, too, for furloughed men —
Marked men by reason of a crutch, or scar,
Or uplooped sleeve, or inconspicuous badge
That signed a famous corps, or laurels won.
And fifes there were, and drums, and blaring brass,
Victorious huzzas, and cursed defeats,
And moaning, muffled dirge—but after all
'Twas only war. Oh, how they headlong flocked,
The boyish knights, from out the college halls
To the clear notes, as though to festival!
Oh, how the under-aged in reverence
Gazed on these soldier-lads as paladins,
Eager to do them homage by a stare,
Presuming in a courage-burst to touch
A scabbard or a musket—then what bliss!
Oh, how the pretty, heart-whole girls would clap
Their little pinkish palms as ranks passed by,
And how the anxious-browed, heart-harrowed ones
Would garner tremblingly fond farewell words!
Our hero Arthur scarcely passed the bound
That gave him title to gird on a sword,
Was of that bravely budding florilege
Which bloomed the brighter in an atmosphere
Half dimmed with battle-murk. And off he marched
One of a thousand in a bluish line
O'ercanopied by "God-speeds" hurtling up
From dense-packed throats along the thoroughfare,
From peopled windows, balconies and roofs —
A wide, reverberating span of sound —
Clear, dainty trebles mingling with the bass.
And one there was who caught young Arthur's eye
Called Nora, whom he had for long time loved,

But not as yet dared ask to be his wife.
A glance, a smile all tears, a kerchief-wave
From her, and he was gone! We wait for hours
To see a face among the marching ranks,
Or masquerading throngs that frolic on
To jocund airs, or through unpeopled ways
Passing without a note—and in a trice
All's o'er; yet for some glimpses we would wait
Our life's due, proffering gratitude to God
For their fulfilment brief.

Then trailed long months
For Nora killing time with lagging tasks,
Cross-harrowed by her lacerating fears —
Fears unallayed by reassuring news —
Nor yet a joy for dread of what might come.
"Had he but spoken," so she sadly mused,
"And authorized the overtensioned nerve
Whereon doth play each rumor from the field,
It would be easier now to front the world,
Reaping its golden, ripening sympathy.
But this suppressed expression of despair —
This beating of fierce qualms within a heart
Upwalled and issueless is strain too great
For woman—heroine or no. At best
No one is duped by my chicanery;
Do what I may, my love is on my face."

Meanwhile o'er distant southern hill and dale
Arthur had tramped and countertramped, had fought,
Advanced, withdrawn, lived through drear winter nights
Upon his wilding post, and trailed the dust
'Long torrid roads. And he had lodged the lead

Unwelcome; had been healed, and off again
To stand an easy mark; had won a bar
For gallantry; and what was fairer prize,
A narrow furlough to his home and heart.
It was the time when April weds with May,
When bluets innocent the lowlands frost,
When jonquil and narcissus—firstling flowers —
Bestar the brown, fresh-spaded garden plots,
And when the bluebird, born of spring, flits glad
Among the nascent greens of leafing trees.
Oh, happy birdlings *they* to flit among
The firstling flowers that gleamed above the months'
Dull barrenness! Unmated birdlings they;
But not for that less blest! The glance, the touch,
The smile, the innuendo of a phrase,
The tryst unsanctioned by a formal bond,
The glad good-bye with fond remembrances
Nursed and rehearsed throughout a restless night
The hope of consummation ultimate —
Aye, and the petty doubts and jealousies
Give tenfold zest to the sweet game of Love!

But why, O Time, in thy fell power assured
Shouldst thou assert thyself through day and night?
Why shouldst thou mar the lovers' ecstasy
By grim, perpetual urgence of thy self?
Why fliest thou the fastest, like swift clouds,
When whirlwinds dominate? God knows thou dragg'st
Thy sluggish length along the thorny ways,
When all the sullen air is thick and dead:
But given embowered paths fanned by the gales
Of fresh, delirious joy, thou sweepest on
More fleet of wing than they!

So now arrived
The inevitable day when Arthur's fate
It was to counterchange his arbored hours
For tented life, his rosy dalliance
For briered play of war. Its eve he passed
At gentle Nora's home—an ample house
Where guests might make their separate gatherings,
Nor incommode by their propinquity.
And while some parleyed 'neath the clustered blaze
Of many jets, the lovers sat apart
In the sweet twilight of a high-ceiled hall.
Above them loomed a gemel-window dight,
Athwart whose opalescence rippling poured
The argent radiance of a full-disked moon,
Transmuted into beams of gold, of red,
Of springtide green, and sapphire as the sky.
Nor could the fancy dream an atmosphere
More fairly tinged with ideality.
And chance would have it that the portraitures
That thus did vibrate 'neath the raying moon
Did illustrate the scene about to be.
Within the opening on the left was traced
With lead, and lustrous glass, and vitreous stain —
All framed about with fret and rich palmette —
The piteous image of Andromache
With doomed Astyanax, her lovely babe,
Couched on her fragrant arm, and half-afraid,
As venerable Homer says. And she
Soft-clad in clinging white and palish gold,
With saddest eyes towards Hector slowly moves
Who stands within the opening on the right —
Saving the crested helm—full panoplied
With polished greaves, defensive plate and shield,
With sword insistent, and aggressive spear;

Yet free of brass were both the arms and thighs,
And feet unsandaled, as we see them drawn
With crafty stroke on vases black and red —
The pride of fictile art. And Hector turns
His battle-weathered face unto his spouse
Beloved and infant son—his household's hope;
But his huge torse and massive, sunburnt limbs,
Impatient of delay, confront the hosts
Of long-haired, threatening Greeks. His love doth call
Him homeward; yet more loudly in his ear
Resound the battle-shout and clanging bronze:
And shout and bronze will always overdin
The fainter pulsings of a woman's heart!

Now Arthur heretofore had held his peace,
Thinking the boding time unmeet for cult
Of Love; and wiser deeming it to wait
Till untumultuous winds should waft him home
A veteran scarred, safe-guarded from the storm;
Or if not spared—then kinder unsaid words.
But often, nay, nigh always, purpose melts
As ice-gorged torrents in the tepid spring,
Before the frenzying breath of flaming love.
God! could he hold his speech with Wisdom's leash
In that provoking ambient of light
And opportunity? Out gushed the words
Like huddling waters from a riven dam:
Nor did he give occasion for response
So urgent was his mood. "O Nora, love,
Too well thou knowest what for years hath been
The obvious purport of my speech, my ways,
My exaltations and despondencies;
Of those unheeded moments passed with thee

Upon the willow-garnished, envious stream
Turning aback in eddying, lingering tide
To read again my perfect happiness;
Or there upon the hills beneath the shade
Of courteous trees that in their sympathy
Rustled for joy, while through their rugged boles
The shifting sky-tones called the passing hours;
Of those keen rambles o'er the frozen meads
Thick islanded with leafless, grayish brake;
The pointings of those sweet anthologies,
Culled from selectest bards, I read to thee
Were patent as the golden-greenish rays
Which silted through the leafy tapestries
Imbuing deep the page! And thou dost know
That those long silences of mine derived
From lack of confidence, or jealousy
Unwarranted—yet always mating love—
Were far more eloquent to thee than speech
Or protestation such as all men make,
Be they but stammering clowns, or gentle born:
Yet now, like all, I voice the common words
'I love thee'—out they must, though I had sworn
Forbearance up to heaven." And Nora heard
With joy ineffable; nor did she lower
Her glorious head in maiden modesty,
Nor village-wise let fall her timorous lids,
Too ecstasied to fall, but with a smile
That matched the rippling moon, and (laved with light
Beaming upon her from the pallid robes
Of sad Andromache) she simply said
"'Tis mutual, Arthur, for I love thee, too."

Oh, moments sweet that are vouchsafed to those
Who have controlled expression till the bound

Of Love's last sufferance is attained, and then
Let tongue, and eye, and lip, and fostering hand,
And fast engirdling arm have fullest sway!
To those whose chiefest ravishment hath been
To feel a garment's fold, or yet to touch
Cold, timorous fingers when the hour came
To say "good-night," or kiss some sacred flower,
Nor ever daring more than this in dreams —
Sweet caterers alone of tasted things!
When we have reached this goal of perfect bliss,
Have madly kissed, embraced, and kissed again,
And when Love's fever is at parching height,
Then God should kindly take us to Himself,
And let us lead our life in Paradise;
Since more than this on Earth there cannot be!

But now the ruddier light from Hector's arms
Fell full on Arthur's form, and lit the bars
Upon his shoulder-straps—his captain's badge —
And in his ears delirious from the song
Which Eros, golden-winged, had madly sung,
There seemed to ring the far-off bugle-call,
Sweet soldier-music on the legioned field,
But blaring discord in the myrtled courts.
Then gathering up his disembodied will,
And giving one last desperate embrace,
In Hector-wise he took a hard farewell
From his Andromache unreconciled,
Since chances were that he would no more see
His idoled love—nay, not much more were they
Than death-predicted Hector's; for so high,
So long, so fatal was the ghastly strife
That made of boys precocious manikins
To minister to age and widowhood!

The knightly Trojan, flower of chivalry,
Glutted the nether gates in wardenry
Of cherished spouse and helpless infant son
From the accepted lust of Victory.
And sometimes it doth happen even now —
When Victory is companioned by Restraint —
That a great Cause involving more than life
Doth justify a hecatomb of hearts,
Which women freely give, albeit great —
Aye greater than the sacrifice of men
Who yield God's rarest dower upon the field.
Alas ! more often man doth rush to arms
On some trumped-up excuse ; and though he give
His life—or be enforced by circumstance
To give—he little recks that for this life
That ebbs in sudden agony afar,
At home its counterpart (but oftener more
Than one lorn loving heart) will agonize
Through tarrying, bitter years. A bulletin
Will read "a thousand slain" ; but were it writ
Five-fold, it would come closer to the truth.

Meanwhile the battle's course was bending north
From out the oozing soil incarnadine
Into fair countries virgin yet of blood,
Where tilth of summer checkered all the land,
Where grassy waves were weltering in the breeze,
Where only reapers' ranks marched slowly down
The ripened, swaying, tawny tracts of grain,
Binding and stacking with a unison
Of soldiers on their formal dress-parade —
Yet all so soon to be in wrath defaced !
And every orchard here, and every rise
Of vantage-ground, and every rustic fence,

And reedy marsh, and rocky rural nook,
And copse, and level sweep of yellow corn,
And barn and cot—yea, every tombstone too,
Was now to be a witness carnage-stained
To that stupendous fight which thrice the Sun
Surveyed with reddened orb before he fell
With natural flame into a smokeless west.

In those colossal struggles that have changed
A nation's chart, and turned the thoughts of men
Into fresh grooves, the world alone recalls
In after days some culminating feat —
The apex of the bickering battle flame
Soaring spectacular above the smoke,
Nor heeds the roaring, feeding mass below.
Yet in such battles many a proud exploit
Unblazoned, by some company elect
Is modestly achieved at lurid cost
To waft aloft that dominating flare.
And thus it was with Arthur's regiment,
Updrawn upon the right extreme to guard
The army's flank. Ah, what a gathering
Was there of perfect youth in rarest bloom —
Scholar and athlete standing side by side
Nor one superior in his chivalry.
O reader would you know the goodly names,
Of those who left their heart-beat on the field,
Go seek them on the pallid carven stones
Of that dim Hall where Learning mourns her sons,
Or in the archives of the sturdy State
Which stanchly stood in those most perilous days —
And, God so willing, will forever stand
Perpetual bulwark 'gainst dismembering foes.

Between two bosky hills there lies a field
Scarce channeled by a runnel, wandering
Across its lap into a rocky creek.
In after years when all the land rayed peace,
I saw this grassy mead and rivulet,
And thickly wooded western rise beyond,
Then bristling with a dense victorious foe,
Unnerved as yet by withering reverse,
While Arthur's regiment lay stretched along
The eastern woodland's verge, awaiting word.
Alas! it came—a folly—to advance
And clear the facing forest foeman-free.
So off they leaped expectant to their fate
This unsupported handful of youth's bloom
To be unpetaled by deflowering Death.
Mine not the muse to sing the heroic deeds
Of those fair boys—for boys they seem to me
Adown the dim perspective of long years.
More eloquent than rhetoric of mine
Is the laconic utterance of the bronze
Which curtly tells in figures unadorned
The ampler story of their gallant charge.
And better so: what need of foul detail
Or circumstanced recital of Hell's work
To gorge the gluttony of morbid taste?
No portraiture so hideous for my pen!
My task alone to say that Arthur fell
Leaping the brook with unintentioned shriek,
And helpless lay until Occasion came
To bear him with the comrades who yet breathed
Beneath whatever shelter there might be
Of house, or cot, or barn. The surgeon said
His chances for recovery were good:
And this he wrote a-home in charactry

All tremulous—a brief and buoyant scrawl,
Effusing pathos, bringing piteous tears
To those who read it after lapse of days.
But what might be a chance in hospital
Well-ventilate, miasma-free, and pure,
And sentineled by therapeutic art,
Is small, indeed, where battle-mangled men
(If flesh unmoulded can be called a man)
Are crowded into bedless, airless space
With only such attendance as Need's pinch
Can give—of small avail to save a life —
And all the festering chamber reeks decay.
What wonder is it that the poison lodged
In Arthur's lacerated limb, and spread;
That fever pulsed its venom to the brain
Until he knew not what was here or there,
What present was or past, or who it was
That motherlike did minister his wants!
For now had hastened to the moaning field
A band of saintly women unto whom
A cry of pain is as the bugle-call,
The God-sent call of Opportunity;
Who seek what strong, yet flinching men evade;
To whom a sickening sight is as a crown.
And one of these angelic, fearless souls
Stood over Arthur in his stress and cared
For him, and caught his raving, wandering speech
Dissevered by the parching fever's heat,
And stored it in her memory to sate
The hunger of poor Nora's empty heart,
Avid of every crumb, in dearth of news
(For they were comrades in their girlish days).
And much she understood; but more there was
That seemed an aftermath from college books —

Fruitless—mere Recollection's freakish crop —
Not knowing of that parting, moonlight scene
Beneath the argent, rippling, pictured glass ;
And this was mingled incoherently
With animating words and curt commands
Flung out in ardor of the onward rush ;
With tender utterance of a lover's thrill,
Both reminiscent, and of trysts to be.
" How soft thy lips are, Nora, and how warm !
So soft and warm as peaches' velvet bloom
Espaliered on a sunny, ripening wall —
O poor Andromache ! how sad thy gaze,
Shadowed with foresight of the dismal years,
As golden grain is shadowed by the sweep
Of some dark, ominous cloud—the golden grain ?
Look there ! another glittering, compact corps
Onmarching through the corn—the blue on gold —
What splendid spectacle ! What timely aid ! —
See Hector ! how he shines in burnished brass
Eager to go, and take his death foredoomed
From swift, implacable Achilles' spear —
Never again to see Andromache
Sad-eyed, and robed in gleaming white and gold,
Gold as the yet untrampled grain—if I
Like Hector ne'er should see thee more nor kiss
Thee once again beneath the pictured glass ! —
Ah, he was death-appointed by the gods,
But I shall see thee, Nora, soon, so soon —
The surgeon says my ill is trivial thing,
And they will carry me into the North —
The warless North—no battle-torment there ;
For as the sun declined we stemmed the tide
Of northward flowing blood—from time to time
A keenish pang—that's all—and that will end."

Thereon he upward bent his brow in pain
Like that reft Niobe we know so well,
Nor did he seem unlike her; for so young
Was he, with features almost womanish,
And white as she by pallor of his ill.
Anon he broke again his reticence
With roaming thoughts in death-approaching voice.
"The order, men, has come to take the wood,
'Tis murder, yet we must—close up, my boys,
And steady there—the colonel's down—the flag,
The flag has shifted hands, but still—I'm hit—
O poor Andromache, thou never more
Wilt see thy living Hector; oh, but I
Shall soon be with my loving, promised bride—
What awfulness it must be ne'er to see
Again in throbbing life one's heart of hearts!
Dear God! I thank Thee that Thou hast vouchsafed
To me another night beneath the rays
That ripple through the moonbeam lighted glass.
O Nora, love, what joy—so soon—so soon—
O Lord! how good to let me live—and Nurse,
It can't be long—before—before—before * * *"
And then he swooned into eternity.
Oh, close his weary lids, and let him sleep!

Hark! the slow music moans upon the ear,
And mingles with the fluting of glad birds;
Hark! the Dead March reverberates its woe
Through placid college-garths and leafy elms.
From out the chapel-porch is slowly borne
By comrade arms, the ebon coffin draped
With red and white, and stars on azure field—
The Nation's flag, for which he gave his all—
While on the lid there lies the ball-rent hat

With veteran sword, the gift of one beloved
Who held him knightlier than other men.
Then follow weeping, sabled relatives
And solemn, silent groups of foretime friends
Wending their journey to the awaiting grave.
A volley—and the obsequies are o'er
Well-nigh unheeded by the listless world.
A thousand laurels garlanded the tombs
Of those first few who fell spectacular
In what was deemed beginning and the end,
(Yet which was merely prelude to the play)
While every tongue and print outblared their names.
But as the smoke-encumbered years rolled on,
And the black cannon's deep, continuous roar
Knolled the out-crushing of unnumbered lives
Lying like windrows on the close-scythed field,
One life, or e'en a hundred, scarcely claimed
The indurated public sympathy.

And all is habit. A mere scratch will draw
The tears from girlish eyes—those very eyes
That later view drop-dry the appalling scenes
Presided over by the surgeon's knife,
Wherefrom an unused man would shrink ash-lipped.
And those pure Vestal Virgins who flung down
Their sacred thumbs, and shrieked away the life
Of some ennetted victim on the sand
Blood-mottled of the Colosseum's floor,
Who knows? may have drawn practice from some game
As semi-brutal as a sport of ours —
Not bloodless—that doth fascinate our fair.

How heardest thou, sweet girl, the announcing
word

That brought thee death in life? Didst thou, indeed,
Like fair Andromache when at thy loom
Catch the shrill cry of women through the house
And let thy shuttle fall? Or hadst thou it
Point-blank from some officious, downright friend?
Or did some tender one with cautious tongue
Lead gently on to half-expected doom?
We would not know, where not to know is gain.
Often we saw thee in thy mourning robes,
With eyes dark-housed, telling of heavy days
And long oppressive nights, which were as one
For cruel negligence of craved for sleep —
Capricious sleep that fosters unimplored
The drunkard and the glutton, yet which leaves
The righteous anguished to consort the night
With counted hours that never greet pale dawn!
Some grief there is which like an Eastern storm
Fumes fiercely on the scabrous, rock-bound coast
And edges all the land with plunging foam,
Making a man to pray for those at sea.
Then westward shifts the sudden wind and smokes
The thwarting billows till they seem afire.
Anon the gloom is sundered by the beams
Of a victorious sun, and every wave
Flashes a bright-hued radiance, as the drops
Of sparkling dew on a clear summer morn.
But otherwise was sad-eyed Nora's grief
After the stress of passion was foregone.
It seemed alike to one of those soft days
That Autumn generates in northern climes,
When all is stirless in the silent air,
And the veiled sun illuminates the land,
Nor is there clear-drawn shade nor sharp edged light,
But everywhere gleam lucent rays diffused

Upon the meadow's lingering summer green,
Upon the gala trees, upon the pines
That fang their roots into the craggy seams
Of crests soft-limned against unazured skies.
So in an unharsh atmosphere of grief
Illuming all the coigns of Memory
(That else were shadowed by some joy too bright),
She lived her charitable life—a life
Port-open to all claims for sympathy.
Nor was she suitorless. It had been well,
Perhaps, could she have ta'en that frequent cure —
Which has the warranty of virtue proved
By countless happy lives—of second love
Whereto the first is but a portico
Opening on chambers richly decorate —
Substantial dwellings of a sterling joy.
It had been well: but yet her vacant heart
Could lodge none else save phantoms from the past
That winged and moaned through it in cadence sweet,
Though sad, shedding a temporal balm that lulled;
As nocturn breezes lute upon the trees
Embosoming a grieving home, and bring
Unbroken sleep to the bereaved within.
The routined hours fulfilled her daily life
With pious act—with all those delicate deeds
Grief knows so well to minister to Grief.
But when at shut of day the leisure came,
And the queen moon paced stately up the sky
All diamond-crowned, it was her wont to sit
Beneath the gemel-window where of yore
She sat inlocked, and heard the interweave
Of colored phrase, Love's music-tapestry,
Awhile great Hector cast his ruddy beams,
And his fair Trojan spouse shed silver rays

Upon the parting pair. Some cynics say
Nor man nor woman dies of broken heart:
False! false! Each day heaps up its hecatomb
Uncharted, unbeknown to coroner
Or him who heals, or maybe even those
Who stand same-blooded round the open grave.
When some fierce malady assails a life
Hanging in equilibrium between
Two clamorous worlds; when convalescence counts
On every small, restorative ally,
Then who shall say that buoyancy of soul
Avails not? Or if Death shall sink the scale,
Would not a leaden heart effect the plunge?
Howbeit the diagnosis authorized
Would credit loss of life to the disease
Authenticate by obvious evidence.

In her blest ministrations to the poor,
Mewed noisomely in airless, dayless dens,
A fell infection poisoned Nora's blood
Depleting life down to its very dregs.
Nor could the guardians of health foretell
The end, content to issue bulletins
Proclaiming pulse-rate and degree of heat,
Leaving solution to the questioner.
And long her gentle spirit fluttered thus
Between the light and dark; though what were dark
To most, to her was craved, celestial light.
And this continued longing for her heaven,
Where she would rest in rapt, companioned bliss,
Guided her willing footsteps thitherward,
As one is often guided without ken
Toward what the mind exclusively portrays.
The experts said "the crest of the disease

Has foamed itself away, and calm prevails :
Her bark should weather—yet it slowly sinks."

Upon the wall there hung where she could see —
When first the glimmering light of waking day
Sieved through the latticed panes, and its last flare
Dropped into night—her dear memorials,
His sword and sash, the eagled belt, the hat
Shot-pierced, the twice-barred, war-dimmed shoulder-straps,
The crutch—historian of his former wounds —
Former to that his last. O sacred things !
Will ye be so when she their celebrant
Hath passed ? But while the flickering spark of life
Still measurably gleamed in her deep eyes,
And warmed the paling lip, they were to her
His symbol, sign, his very angel self
Poised on his wide, ethereal, sunny vans,
Stretching his urgent arms from higher realms,
Taking her hands in his with greeting smile,
Waiting to waft her to celestial joy.
Thus when her tide had ebbed to earthly bourne
And lapped the gates of Paradise, she cried,
" How good Thou art, O Lord, to let me pass
With Arthur hand in hand, nor agonize
On some untended, bloody field as those
Who fell defaced on that most awful day !
How good Thou art, O Christ, to send to me
Thy white-plumed messenger—and *mine*—to lead
Me from the torturing dark to blessed light !
Poor Hector, he received the stroke alone,
Far from Andromache his loving spouse
Weaving at home; but I—but I, dear Christ,
I die with *him*—dear Lord—dear Christ—*we* come !

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